



**AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**THE NINTH REVIEW OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON  
THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**28 April 2015**

**Australian National Statement**

**Statement by H.E. Gillian Bird  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
of Australia to the United Nations**

(Check against delivery)

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Thank you Ambassador Feroukhi, it is an honour to be given the opportunity to address this Review Conference on Australia's behalf.

I think we are all acutely aware of the context in which this Review Conference is taking place. Deteriorating relations between Russia and the United States and NATO over Ukraine; the continued inability to convene a conference on a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone; growing frustration among many NPT non-nuclear weapon states at the slow pace of nuclear disarmament: these complications might lead us to conclude that prospects for meaningful progress in multilateral arms control are bleak.

Nonetheless, there is a broad base of agreement amongst our Governments about the continuing importance of the NPT; and the relevance of its three pillars: disarmament; non-proliferation; and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. With good will, we think this Review Conference can make progress under each of the pillars.

Our membership of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) in part gives us this confidence. The NPDI is a broad cross-regional group of countries with very different views on how to progress nuclear disarmament. Yet we have still been able to reach consensus in 17 working papers presented at previous Preparatory Committee meetings; we have also agreed on a comprehensive working paper containing consensus language across the three pillars, for possible inclusion in the RevCon outcomes document.

We are encouraged also by the announcement on 2<sup>nd</sup> April that the E3+3 and Iran have established the parameters of a possible agreement to address international concerns about Iran's nuclear program, although there remain many details yet to be addressed.

**Madam President,** for Australia a core objective at the Review Conference is to preserve and strengthen the NPT and the norms it enshrines as the cornerstone of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. For 45 years this Treaty has provided important security and welfare benefits to all States. Our collective commitment to the Treaty has prevented a global nuclear arms race and contained the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It has strengthened the "taboo" against nuclear weapons use in conflict and has established as a powerful norm that we are working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The NPT has also enabled the international community to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technologies, including in human health, agriculture and food security, water and the environment. Australia is a strong supporter of the IAEA's work in spreading the peaceful benefits of nuclear technology to all States. We are a leader in the use of low enriched uranium for producing medical isotopes, thus minimising stocks of highly enriched uranium and reducing the associated proliferation risks.

We also contribute to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Program, and we have provided in-kind and financial support for the Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI). In this regard I am very pleased to announce that this year the Australian Government will make an additional voluntary contribution to the PUI of 350,000 Euros. Of this amount 250,000 Euros will go towards supporting the redevelopment of the IAEA's Seibersdorf laboratories; and 100,000 Euros will go towards PUI projects in the Asia-Pacific.

**Madam President,** a growing number of States have expressed frustration at the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. These frustrations have led some to call for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. But our view is that it is important to address the security concerns that lead states to develop nuclear weapons, and to engage the countries with nuclear weapons to persuade them to get rid of them. Australia stands for practical, realistic measures to achieve actual nuclear disarmament. We will elaborate on this view— which is shared by a significant number of states — in a separate statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Australia, like many States, is concerned that 45 years since the NPT entered into force some 16,000 nuclear warheads still exist. We remain concerned that some States continue to produce weapons-grade uranium and plutonium, although we acknowledge that a number of nuclear weapon states have declared moratoria on the production of fissile material. We are concerned that some States are developing new, small, battlefield scale nuclear weapons.

It will be important that this Review Conference looks forward at practical ways to implement our commitments under the Treaty and the 2010 Action Plan. We must focus on concrete steps such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; commencing negotiations for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty; and developing robust techniques for verifying disarmament and the dismantlement of nuclear weapons. And we must continue to ensure that safeguards regimes remain strong and adequately resourced as these underpin our non-proliferation efforts.

Only steps such as these will make a real difference in leading us towards a world where nuclear technology is used only for peaceful purposes.

Thank you Madam President.