



Note No. 044/2013

The Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and has the honour to refer to Notes Verbale: ODA/09-2013/NWFZME (25 February 2013); ODA/12-2013/WMDT (15 February 2013); and ODA/27-2013/WAD (25 February 2013). The Permanent Mission of Australia has the further honour to submit the attached submissions in respect of General Assembly (First Committee) resolutions: 67/28 - "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East"; 67/44 - "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction"; and 67/48 - "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control".

The Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office for Disarmament Affairs the assurances of its highest consideration.



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67/28 - "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East"

Australia continues to support the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, freely arrived at by regional States. The Government of Australia supports the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons concerning the 1995 Middle East resolution. Australia, through the 10 member Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), has released statements (the most recent from the 9 April 2013 NPDI Ministerial meeting in The Hague) regretting the postponement of the conference and expressing continuing support for the Facilitator. The April 2013 statement further calls for the earliest possible convening of a successful conference with the participation of all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at. Australia will continue to support constructive efforts towards progress in the implementation of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone.

67/44 - "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction"

Australia considers that the increasingly diffuse nature of the terrorist threat and mobility of terrorist groupings have been evident in that past twelve months. Effective partnerships and global counter-terrorism cooperation are more important than ever, not least in preventing terrorists from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction.

Australia attaches the highest priority to security of its own chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials. Security is maintained through harmonised approaches at the federal, state and territory levels of government. CBRN security is a strong theme of Australia's work in the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Nuclear Security Summit and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Australian also works closely with Southeast Asian countries on capacity-building to reduce the risk of terrorists acquiring and using CBRN materials and to enhance CBRN security measures.

Australia has the honour to chair the Australia Group, which works to strengthen national export controls over material and technologies which could be used for the production of chemical and biological weapons. As a strong supporter of national export controls, Australia is committed to expanding international trade in chemical and biological goods for peaceful purposes and maintaining active chemical and biotechnological industries within a secure regulatory framework. In this context, Australia encourages United Nations Member States to implement CBRN export controls drawing on Australia Group and Nuclear Suppliers Group guidelines.

67/48 - "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control"

Australia strongly supports and promotes the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and the broader women, peace and security agenda will continue to be a core priority for Australia during our term on the UNSC.

Over the past three years Australia has actively supported women's participation in regional and international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and UN Programme of Action (PoA) discussions to ensure that the voices of women are heard on disarmament and arms control. Australia co-hosted the March 2012 Brisbane Pacific Regional Workshop on the ATT and UNPoA with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Oxfam, where prominent female NGO leaders from the Pacific and Caribbean spoke about the specific impacts of illicit small arms on women and the important role of CSOs in disarmament.

Australia has also supported the Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) to hold three regional workshops in the Caribbean. These workshops produced a common regional position on the ATT among CARICOM members that cemented the importance of including gender in the ATT treaty text. During negotiations toward the adoption of the ATT, Australia consistently supported the inclusion of strong humanitarian references in the Treaty, including recognition of victims of gender-based violence, which are now reflected in the Preamble to the Treaty.

Australia also supported Pacific and Caribbean women's civil society organisations (CSO) participation in ATT negotiations for three years via AusAID's International Seminar Support Scheme (ISSS). Where government officials were supported by ISSS, Australia ensured a gender balance to ensure women were given the opportunity to represent their governments at a senior level at the United Nations.

At the domestic level, the Australian Government Office for Women, in cooperation with relevant Australian agencies, has developed a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security to implement UNSC Resolution 1325 and related resolutions to protect and empower women and girls in fragile, conflict and post-conflict situations. For the past three years, Australia has strongly supported the application of women to participate (successful in 2012) in the UN Disarmament Fellowship Program.

In September 2011, the Government appointed Australia's first Global Ambassador for Women and Girls. The Ambassador is responsible for high-level international advocacy to advance the political, economic and social empowerment of women and girls, with a focus on the women, peace and security agenda.