



# AUSTRALIA



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## United Nations Disarmament Commission

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### Statement by David Yardley, Counsellor (Political), Australian Mission to the United Nations

(As delivered)

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Chair

At the outset I would like to express our condolences to the Russian Federation for the terrorist attack suffered today in St. Petersburg.

I congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the 2017 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We also congratulate all the Bureau members. You have the full support of the Australian delegation.

Chair

This year the UNDC enters the critical third year of its three year work cycle. No effort must be spared in achieving a positive outcome. In closing the session last year, the Chair – our good regional neighbour the Permanent Representative of Vanuatu – spoke positively of the “common ground” achieved in Working Group I and the “tangible progress” made in Working Group II. This is the point and the mind-set from which we must pick up our work this year.

In our deliberations in Working Group 1, we must remember that there remains one common objective: the international community shares the overarching goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons.

Australia remains active in pursuit of that common objective. States may differ on the means and sequencing for achieving that goal but, ultimately, the international community should focus not on differences but on common ground. The NPT Review Conference cycle commences next month and we look forward to working with Member States to make the PrepCom a productive one. Australia, through the cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Vienna Group of 10, will jointly submit working papers to the PrepCom covering issues such as the FMCT, CTBT and transparency.

As a member of this year's High-Level Expert Preparatory Group on a Treaty Banning the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons we will be looking to expand on the excellent work of the 2014-15 Group of Governmental Experts which produced a robust consensus report reflecting the most in-depth discussions on the topic to date. We consider an FMCT to be the next logical step and an indispensable one in progressing nuclear disarmament, and the most practical and effective way of contributing to global zero in the current strategic environment.

The current Working Group I draft document rightly refers to the need for effective disarmament measures to be verifiable. Australia will continue to contribute to the ongoing technical and policy work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We also strongly supported the adoption of the UNGA Resolution on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, and applaud Norway for this initiative.

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of the CTBT's opening for signature. The Treaty has been a successful instrument of international cooperation, effectively establishing a global norm against testing. However, voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive tests are no substitute for a permanent and legally binding commitment to end nuclear testing and all other nuclear explosions. This can only be achieved by the entry-into-force of the

Treaty. This year's CTBT Article XIV Conference in September will be important in driving us toward that goal.

Australia, through its working paper to the Special Session on Disarmament Open-Ended Working Group, has been seeking to reinvigorate this process by promoting a practical, outcomes focused approach, or "niche" approach, as we have referred to it. The broad ranging discussions on disarmament issues we hold here in the UNDC and elsewhere are extremely useful but don't need to be duplicated at every disarmament forum. The SSOD could establish itself as a unique forum for taking forward specific issues in the SSOD 1 Programme of Action in a manageable way. We hope that Member States can support such an approach when we meet later this year.

Chair

A positive outcome in the UNDC Working Group II on conventional weapons would be an ideal contribution to the forthcoming Third Review Conference on the Program of Action on Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons that takes place next year. We commend France for its leadership as President-designate of the Conference in starting the consultation process early. Australia will constructively participate in this process.

Australia will also continue to work towards the universalisation of the Arms Trade Treaty - including through partnering with Civil Society; contributing to UNSCAR and the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund; and working closely with states across the Indo-Pacific and elsewhere to build understanding of the Treaty and capacity to implement it. We strongly encourage further signatories and ratifications.

In closing, I would like to again call on all delegations to focus on the common ground. There has never been a more important time for the UNDC to achieve a positive outcome.

I thank you, Chair