



# AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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### First Committee – Nuclear Weapons

**Statement by H.E. John Quinn  
Ambassador for Disarmament and Permanent Representative of  
Australia to the United Nations, Geneva**

(Check against delivery)

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Our First Committee proceedings this year take place in the shadow of the grave global security threat posed by **North Korea's** illegal nuclear and ballistic missile development programs. Its irresponsible and dangerous actions, in breach of UN Security Council Resolutions, are a major set-back to achieving our shared goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons.

Australia is moving quickly to fully implement the **UN Security Council resolutions** relating to this crisis – as all countries must. Full political, diplomatic and economic pressure must be applied to compel North Korea to change course.

This crisis is also a sobering reminder that sustainable and effective nuclear disarmament measures must take account of the international security environment –including to address

the security dimensions of why states possess nuclear weapons.

Despite the difficult global and regional security environment, there is much we can do to reduce risk, build trust, and move forward in practical ways. This requires patience, creativity, innovation, and determined effort.

The **NPT** is the world's most important nuclear disarmament tool; an essential cornerstone of the modern collective security system which legally binds over 190 States Parties. And the consensus 2010 NPT Action Plan remains our blueprint for practical action.

Implementing that plan needs sustained commitment on at least four well-established tracks:

- Bringing the **CTBT** into force;
- Negotiating a treaty to end the production of **fissile material** for nuclear weapons;
- Achieving more **transparency** about nuclear arsenals; and
- Solving complex practical problems concerning how to **verify** steps toward nuclear disarmament.

Australia advocates the '**Progressive Approach**' to progress disarmament through these and other concrete, realistic steps. We also work to build bridges and find agreement through the cross-regional **Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative**. Foreign Ministers of NPDI member countries held a very productive meeting during leaders' week in New York last month.

Australia is pleased to present, together with Mexico as lead this year and New Zealand, **the annual resolution on the CTBT**. Continued DPRK provocations highlight the urgency of CTBT's entry into force and its universalisation. The CTBT's influence rests on its normative force and the proven effectiveness of its verification mechanism. It has established and entrenched the de facto norm against nuclear testing.

We are encouraged by the substantive work of the **FMCT** High level experts group (HLEG) under Canada's strong leadership – in which Australia is participating actively. It is up to all of us to use the group's work as a springboard to start negotiations. The International Partnership for **Nuclear Disarmament Verification** (IPNDV) continues to advance essential practical, problem-solving work in this field. And we look forward to the Nuclear Disarmament Verification Group of Government Experts deliberations next year.

All these strands of activity contribute to **confidence-building**. Trust must be built by all relevant players.

We urge those states possessing nuclear weapons to take the lead in demonstrating concrete progress. Greater transparency with regard to nuclear arsenals would be a welcome next step. Negotiations on a post-New **START** arms reduction treaty (START) between the US and the Russian Federation will be important in demonstrating this progress. So is ongoing dialogue on nuclear doctrine and strategic stability, including outreach by the P5 on these subjects during First Committee.

The only path to the elimination of nuclear weapons is effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. This requires the constructive engagement of all relevant countries – including those with nuclear weapons.

Australia shares the widespread commitment to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, that objective is ill served by the **Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty**. That treaty has deepened divisions, undermined some past progress and created damaging ambiguities as well as unhelpfully creating a rival forum for further work on nuclear disarmament. A key problem for Australia is that the treaty seeks to delegitimise **extended deterrence**. The ban treaty will not advance nuclear disarmament or security.

In Australia's view our shared focus should instead centre on our common interests in supporting and strengthening the NPT.

Australia will continue to work pragmatically and effectively to support the NPT as the cornerstone of the international community's long-term disarmament efforts – with its proven safeguards and verification arrangements. Our work has never been so important. Nuclear weapons pose a serious threat to all nations. We will do all in our power to realise the shared goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons.