



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 3 May 2010

General Debate

Statement by Mr Stephen Smith Foreign Minister of Australia

(Check against delivery)

General Debate Statement for Delivery

Mr President

I congratulate you on your appointment.

The Australian delegation stands ready to assist you in bringing about a successful conclusion to this important Review Conference.

I reaffirm Australia's firm commitment to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

For Australia the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. It delivers real and tangible security dividends for all of us.

Now in its 40th year, the fundamental bargain that underpins the NPT is as valid today as it was in 1970: the pledge by non-nuclear weapon states not to acquire nuclear weapons; the commitment by nuclear weapon states to pursue disarmament; and access for all states parties to peaceful nuclear energy.

The fact that no nuclear weapon has been used in anger since the end of the Second World War owes much to the NPT.

This Review Conference must reaffirm our shared commitment to the Treaty's core principles and achieve outcomes that strengthen both non-proliferation and disarmament, and facilitate access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The international community cannot afford anything less.

The goal of a world without nuclear weapons can only be achieved with commitment to action by both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states.

Nuclear weapons states must commit themselves to this goal, exercise leadership, and chart the course to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Non-nuclear weapon states must comply with their Treaty obligations and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreements, and work to reinforce the Treaty's non-proliferation regime.

Australia recognises the value many states place on access to the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy. We support the right of state parties to participate in the development of peaceful nuclear energy, within a framework that reduces proliferation risk and adheres to the highest international safeguards standards.

Mr President

Australia's commitment to a successful Review Conference is reflected by the work we have undertaken in the lead up to this Conference.

In 2008, Australia and Japan established the independent International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. The Commission's report, released last December, contains thoughtful analysis and recommendations for action on the critical issues before this Conference.

Together with Japan, Australia has also submitted to the Conference a package of practical disarmament and non-proliferation measures, which we hope can help achieve consensus on steps to strengthen the Treaty.

Australia believes this Conference takes place at a time of growing momentum towards the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

We warmly welcome and congratulate the United States and the Russian Federation on the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty – ‘New START’ – that further reduces the numbers of their deployed strategic weapons.

We commend France and the United Kingdom for the unilateral steps they have taken to reduce their nuclear arsenals from Cold War heights.

The recently released US Nuclear Posture Review also sent a clear signal of commitment to make progress on disarmament and strengthen non-proliferation.

The Nuclear Security Summit last month highlighted the need to secure nuclear materials and prevent acts of nuclear terrorism and proliferation.

Australia hopes this momentum can be sustained and accelerated. We want to see further, deeper, verifiable and irreversible cuts in all nuclear arsenals, and a continuing reduction of their role in national security strategies.

Entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would be a major step forward for disarmament. Australia urges states that have yet to do so to sign and ratify the CTBT.

We also urge all states to support negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes.

While there is this positive momentum, there are also worrying developments.

Australia remains deeply concerned by Iran's nuclear program. Australia calls on Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA and to abide by IAEA and UN Security Council resolutions.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) claims to have withdrawn from the NPT. Australia calls on the DPRK to resume international negotiations and return to full compliance with the NPT and its associated safeguards agreement.

The best way to bolster compliance is to ensure the IAEA has the tools and authority to provide credible assurances that a state party does not have any undeclared or covert facilities and that their nuclear facilities are peaceful.

Australia believes that a comprehensive safeguards agreement combined with an Additional Protocol should be recognised as the basic standard of verification.

Australia has made adherence to the Additional Protocol a condition of supply for Australian uranium. We encourage other states parties to take a similar approach.

Australia also believes that these issues of non-compliance and withdrawal must be adequately addressed, by the UN Security Council if necessary, in accordance with the Security Council's role under the UN Charter.

Australia reaffirms our commitment to a universal NPT and calls on those states that are not party to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible as non-nuclear weapon states and without preconditions.

Australia also recognises the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on a verifiable zone in the Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction. It is regrettable that there has been no movement to date on this issue. Australia stands ready to support constructive efforts by states parties to progress implementation of the 1995 resolution.

Mr President

Beyond this Review Conference, the enduring health of the NPT and its contribution to our collective security will only be maintained by states parties' political will and concrete action to meet all their obligations and commitments.

The goal of a world without nuclear weapons is one that will not be achieved overnight. We need to work in a determined and systematic way to fulfil that goal. We owe a world free from nuclear weapons to both current and future generations.

Let's ensure this Conference makes its own contribution to that goal.

Thank you.