FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2005 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

STATEMENT BY

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Statement by H.E. Mr John Dauth LVO
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

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Mr Chairman

The Australian delegation congratulates you most warmly on your appointment as Chairman of this Committee. We look forward to working with others to assist you in your important task of guiding the PrepCom's work.

Our meeting unfolds as the international community faces new and important security challenges. The terrible events of 11 September last year in this city and Washington DC have focused renewed international attention on the gravity of the risks posed to all of us by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, including to non-state actors. These developments have further highlighted the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's critical importance.

Maintaining and strengthening the Treaty's effectiveness is the task now before us during this next review cycle. We have sound foundations upon which to build, including the good outcome of the 2000 Review Conference.

Mr Chairman

With 187 parties the NPT has achieved near universality. We call upon the four countries yet to join - India, Pakistan, Israel and Cuba - to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states.

Mr Chairman

Article VI commitments are a central obligation of the Treaty. Useful progress has been made on nuclear disarmament, even though this progress may not have been entirely uniform or consistent. But we expect further action on nuclear disarmament, and remain fully committed to working, by balanced and progressive steps, towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The 2000 Review Conference's 13 nuclear disarmament steps are a strong basis for progress. We recognise that some of the 13 steps are long-term goals, some are more ready for progress that others, and some have been overtaken by events. However, we will need to ensure that the overall intent of the 13 steps is maintained.

Australia welcomes the commitment by Presidents Bush and Putin to reduce further the size of deployed strategic nuclear arsenals to between 1700 and 2200 warheads within a decade, and their intention to seek a legally binding agreement to cover these reductions.
Mr Chairman

Article VI obligations are directed at all NPT parties, not just the nuclear weapon states. Non-nuclear weapon states must reinforce non-proliferation and disarmament goals. In this regard, it is gratifying that 165 countries have signed and 90 have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), firmly establishing the CTBT as a powerful international norm against nuclear testing. Steady progress is also being made in establishing the International Monitoring System (IMS) under the CTBT to verify compliance.

It is disappointing that the CTBT is not yet in force. We urge once again those yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without delay. Until the CTBT enters into force, existing moratoriums on nuclear testing must be maintained, and strong support for the development of the IMS network sustained.

Also important to nuclear arms control and disarmament is negotiation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). We look to this PrepCom to reaffirm the need for an immediate commencement and speedy conclusion of FMCT negotiations. Pending a start to formal negotiations, Australia sees value in further informal work on FMCT issues, building on the workshops and seminars held last year. We call upon all relevant states to join a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairman

Universalisation of the Additional Protocol on strengthened safeguards is a key non-proliferation priority and should be supported strongly by the PrepCom. Australia is helping a number of regional countries to ratify and implement Additional Protocols. We also welcome the extensive efforts of Japan to promote this objective. The PrepCom should also reiterate the 2000 Final Document’s call for states yet to bring into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements to do so as soon as possible.

NPT parties must adhere fully to their NPT and IAEA safeguards commitments. The IAEA is still unable to resume its verification and monitoring activities in Iraq under relevant Security Council resolutions. We call upon Iraq to move immediately to cooperate fully and without condition with UNMOVIC and the IAEA to achieve full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, and its obligations as a party to the NPT.

We remain concerned about the lack of cooperation from the DPRK in fulfilling the obligations under its NPT safeguards agreement with the IAEA. The IAEA’s verification task in the DPRK is complex and likely to take 3-4 years. The DPRK must move quickly to cooperate fully with the IAEA to ensure that it benefits fully from the peaceful nuclear cooperation offered to it through the KEDO light water reactor project.

This review cycle will need to convey the international community’s continuing concern about the 1998 South Asian nuclear tests and reaffirm that India and Pakistan do not have the status of nuclear weapon states. We look to India and Pakistan for progress on near
term non-proliferation steps such as maintaining their moratoriums on nuclear tests, signature of the CTBT and application of stringent export controls.

Mr Chairman

The peaceful nuclear cooperation provisions of Article IV are an essential part of the balance of rights and obligations states assume under the Treaty. Australia has actively participated over the Treaty's 30 year history in multilateral, regional and bilateral nuclear technology transfer and technical cooperation activities intended to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The 2000 Final Document recognised explicitly and prominently the importance of the Treaty's non-proliferation and safeguards commitments to peaceful nuclear commerce and cooperation. We would therefore like to see this NPT review process offer strong support for effective nuclear export controls.

We were heartened by the 2000 NPT Review Conference's reaffirmation of the fullscope safeguards supply condition. At the same time, non-proliferation cannot remain static. Our view is that the "Agency's safeguards system" which non-nuclear weapon state NPT Parties are obliged to accept should come quickly to be regarded as comprising both classical safeguards (INFCIRC/153) and the Additional Protocol (INFCIRC/540).

Mr Chairman

The events of 11 September last year underlined the importance of concerted international efforts to keep nuclear weapons and radiological material out of the hands of terrorists. IAEA safeguards, export controls, and physical protection measures are at the heart of international efforts to prevent the misuse of nuclear material by either state and non-state actors.

Australia welcomes the progress made on strengthening the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and urges agreement on the text of a revised convention at the earliest possible date. We welcome the plan of action developed by the IAEA to upgrade protection against nuclear terrorism considered at the recent IAEA Board of Governors meeting in Vienna, chaired by Ambassador Hughes of Australia. Australia was pleased to be able to offer an early financial contribution to the Agency's new fund, and encourages others to contribute.

Mr Chairman

The NPT remains the world's best defence against the spread of nuclear weapons. It is the only global treaty dedicated to the containment of nuclear weapons and their eventual elimination. The Treaty delivers substantial benefits to all states. Continued strong support for the NPT is a pre-condition to further progress on the Treaty's goals. The Australian delegation looks forward to working closely with others joined by the interest we all share in maintaining and strengthening this fundamental instrument.
Mr Chairman

September 11 last year and subsequent developments have led to a renewed awareness of the risk of nuclear terrorism. While we need to keep this risk in perspective, the gravity of the potential consequences of nuclear terrorism justify a determined and comprehensive response from the international community.

The framework for this response exists in the form of the NPT-based nuclear non-proliferation regime. Strengthening the non-proliferation regime will raise the barriers to misuse of nuclear material by both state and non-state actors.

The risk of nuclear terrorism has added to the urgency of early global application of the Additional Protocol on strengthened safeguards. We again urge those yet to conclude an Additional Protocol to do so as quickly as possible, and those who have signed but not brought it into force to do so without delay.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a particular role to play on nuclear terrorism. The plan of action approved recently by the IAEA Board of Governors offers a sound foundation for improved defences against nuclear and radiological terrorism. Australia was pleased to be able to contribute AU$100,000 to the Agency’s new fund and encourages others to find ways in which they too can contribute.

Enhanced physical protection of nuclear material and facilities is an obvious priority. We welcome the progress made on amending the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) to extend its application. We would like to see an amended CPPNM adopted as quickly as possible, and urge all states yet to join the CPPNM to do so. We also support consideration at an appropriate time of other measures providing enhanced physical protection, perhaps by extending coverage to include radiological sources.

Illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials presents opportunities for terrorists to acquire the means of nuclear terrorism. While the secure custody of such materials is primarily a national responsibility the IAEA is able to make a major contribution in this area by assisting states to upgrade their national capacities to detect and respond to instances of illicit trafficking.

The events of 11 September and the interest of terrorist groups in acquiring weapons of mass destruction underscores the case for effective nuclear export controls preventing the flow of nuclear material and technology to non-state actors and countries which support terrorism. We urge all NPT parties to review their domestic legislation to ensure the effectiveness of their controls on sensitive nuclear and dual-use items. We support consideration by the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Zangger Committee whether existing standards require strengthening to address the issue of nuclear terrorism.
Finally, Mr Chairman, we welcome this opportunity to discuss nuclear terrorism as a demonstration of the NPT review cycle’s capacity to respond to contemporary issues relevant to the Treaty’s goals.

Thank you Mr Chairman