Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review
Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

29 April 2003

Implementation of Article VI of the NPT and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 Decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament"

Report submitted by Australia

The NPT remains essential to international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, facilitate access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and advance nuclear disarmament. The current intense international concern about weapons of mass destruction proliferation, including potentially to non-state groups, has added to the importance of the NPT-based nuclear non-proliferation regime.

As a non-nuclear weapon state, Australia's main contribution to nuclear disarmament is working for progress on the reinforcing steps essential to create an environment favourable to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Australia believes that the Article VI goal of nuclear disarmament can only be achieved through a series of balanced, incremental and reinforcing steps - including nuclear warhead reductions, entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), further progress on nuclear weapon-free zones, and, in particular, a strong and effective nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Australia welcomes the Treaty of Moscow signed by Presidents Bush and Putin in 2002 as a notable further step towards nuclear disarmament. The significance of the Treaty of Moscow lies not just in its quantitative reductions but also in its ushering in of a more cooperative US-Russia arms control relationship. Australia hopes both countries will take advantage of the opportunities provided by this approach to pursue further reductions to strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons in both active service and reserve holdings.

At UNGA 57 Australia was an original co-sponsor of the nuclear disarmament resolution "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", which emphasises the
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central importance of following the practical steps agreed in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference for the systematic and progressive implementation of Article VI commitments.

Australia strongly supports the CTBT and is actively pursuing an ongoing program to secure further signatures and ratifications especially those in the group of 44 States whose ratification is required for entry into force. In the lead-up to this PrepCom we undertook a further round of representations to key countries yet to sign or ratify the CTBT.

Australia is an active participant in development of the CTBT International Monitoring System (IMS) and welcomes the continued progress being made on the IMS. Australia will host the third highest number of IMS stations (after the United States and Russia) and currently has the highest number of CTBT monitoring stations certified as meeting CTBT requirements.

Australia was pleased at UNGA 57 to launch with Japan and the Netherlands a joint Ministerial Statement reaffirming the international community's strong commitment to the CTBT. With Mexico and New Zealand we formed the core group which put forward the resolution on the CTBT adopted at UNGA 57.

Early commencement of negotiations for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) is a key priority for Australia. Australia is continuing to press for a start to FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Australia is also active in promoting examination of issues that will arise in these negotiations, including a verification approach. Pending resolution of the CD deadlock and a start to FMCT negotiations, Australia strongly supports the informal work on FMCT issues being conducted in Geneva and elsewhere, and encourages wide participation in this process.

Effective non-proliferation is essential for a climate conducive to nuclear disarmament. Australia played a prominent role in negotiation of the Additional Protocol on strengthened IAEA safeguards and was the first country to ratify such a Protocol. Australia will continue its pursuit of wide application of the Additional Protocol and recently made further representations to encourage the conclusion of further Additional Protocols.

IAEA safeguards are not static, there has already been considerable evolution since the NPT entered into force (1970), the Additional Protocol and the development of strengthened and integrated safeguards are the most recent manifestation of this. Australia considers that integrated IAEA safeguards are essential to the effective and cost effective implementation of strengthened safeguards.

Australia welcomes Cuba's accession to the NPT and calls upon India, Israel, and Pakistan to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states.
Australia will be working for a fair and balanced treatment of all NPT issues in the 2005 review cycle. Australia encourages all NPT parties to bring to the review process a spirit of constructive cooperation consistent with our shared interests in maintaining and strengthening this vital Treaty.

Regional Approach

Australia considers that outreach activities aimed at encouraging and assisting countries to join relevant multilateral arms control instruments are most effectively carried out on a regional basis. In Australia's case we are concentrating our efforts on our own Asia-Pacific region. Australia conducts outreach programs to regional countries on agreements such as the CTBT, the Additional Protocol and in areas such as export controls. Other NPT parties may wish to consider a similar regional focus for their efforts to promote universal implementation of relevant agreements.