Points for Specific Issues: nuclear disarmament; security assurances

Mr Chairman, Australia has outlined its broad approach to Cluster one issues, so we will use specific-issue time to focus on some practical nuclear disarmament measures.

A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is a vital nuclear disarmament measure.

It would advance nuclear disarmament by capping the amount of fissile material available for nuclear weapons, thereby reinforcing irreversible disarmament.

And it would strengthen non-proliferation goals by tightening further controls over fissile material, thereby reducing risk of diversion to proliferators or terrorists.

Australia seeks a legally binding, non-discriminatory FMCT that provides for appropriate measures to verify parties’ compliance with their obligations.

Such a treaty could be delivered in two steps, the first yielding a treaty containing the core commitment to not produce fissile material for nuclear weapons.

The verification arrangements could then be addressed through subsequent largely technical negotiations.
Australia’s priority in the Conference on Disarmament is to begin negotiation of an FMCT at the earliest possible time.

As we have noted before, the draft program of work proposed by six CD presidents offers a rare chance to start negotiations.

Australia urges CD members to support proposal when CD resumes next week.

Mr Chairman

Entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty would reinforce nuclear disarmament

The complete, effective ban on nuclear testing would constrain development of nuclear weapons.

Parties to the treaty have made significant progress: 177 states have signed the treaty of which 138 have ratified it.

But the treaty still requires ratification of 10 of 44 Annex Two states to enter into force.

As a sign of Australia’s commitment to CTBT, we have served as Article XIV entry into force coordinator (assisted ably by Special Representative Jaap Ramaker).
Australia’s Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, also chaired a Ministerial meeting in support of the CTBT’s entry into force in New York in September 2006.

Despite delays in entry into force, we must recognise the valuable role being played by CTBT through International Monitoring System.

The system comprises 337 monitoring facilities – including seismic, hydro-acoustic, infrasound and radionuclide stations – across the globe.

Australia will be home to third largest number of operational stations after the US and Russia.

IMS development ensures that the CTBT is backed by a strong verification mechanism – that also brings civil and scientific benefits.

Mr Chairman

Non-nuclear weapon states have long sought security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons from nuclear-weapon states.

The importance of security assurances was recognised in the outcome documents of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

And nuclear-weapon-state recognition of the importance of security assurances was noted through UN Security Council Resolution 984.
Nuclear weapon free zones, freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned, are a practical means of delivering security assurances.

Australia was among the first to propose a nuclear weapon free zone for the South Pacific in 1983, some 16 years after the Treaty of Tlateloilo opened for signature.

That proposal resulted in the Treaty of Rarotonga, which established the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone in 1985.

Twelve of the 15 Pacific Islands Forum states are party to treaty, which bans manufacturing, stationing, possession and testing of nuclear weapons in the zone.

All five NPT nuclear weapon states have signed second and third protocols which provide negative security assurances and a commitment not to test nuclear weapons within the application zone, respectively.

All but one of the nuclear weapons states has ratified these protocols.

Mr Chairman

As we noted in our Cluster One statement, the international community expects the nuclear weapon states to take the lead in reducing their nuclear arsenals.
But an FMCT, the CTBT and Nuclear Weapon Free Zones are practical examples of how all states can contribute to realising the vital goal of complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament.