Third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Cluster II Statement by Mr Ian McConville, Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Geneva

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Mr Chairman,

A state pursuing nuclear weapons increases proliferation pressures within a region, and undermines the global non-proliferation architecture. Australia is a firm believer in the importance of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is for this reason that we must all work together both at this PrepCom, and to achieve a good outcome at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, goods and technology.

But to achieve this depends on States taking practical steps in accordance with their obligations and commitments. The 2010 NPT Action Plan outlines key steps all States can take in support of non-proliferation. We urge all States to work together and make every effort to implement the Action Plan. In this regard we encourage all States to complete and present their annual national reporting plans – Australia has submitted its reporting plan against the 64 points of the 2010 Action Plan, and we expect this document to be up on the Paper Smart portal soon.

Mr Chairman,

Australia has been a strong supporter of the International Atomic Energy Agency since its inception in 1957. The IAEA safeguards system provides an invaluable service to NPT State Parties and the international community.

Consistent with Actions 25 and 28, Australia calls on all States yet to conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol with the IAEA to do so without delay.

Through the twelve-nation NPDI, Australia has continued its strong advocacy for the Additional Protocol and modified Small Quantities Protocol. In line with Action 29, we
have conducted outreach to a number of States yet to conclude an AP and stand ready to assist those States to implement an AP, if requested.

Mr Chairman,

Export controls play a crucial role in implementing nuclear non-proliferation obligations under NPT article III, paragraph 2. Through membership of the NPDI and Vienna Group of Ten, and in support of 2010 NPT Action Plan item 35, Australia has contributed to a Working Paper on Vienna Issues for the 2014 PrepCom, covering, inter alia, compliance and verification.

Australia continues to urge all States to establish, develop, review and maintain appropriate, effective national export controls over nuclear and nuclear-related dual-use items and technology. Export control regimes, based on multilaterally negotiated and agreed guidelines and understandings of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and Zangger Committee, provide the most effective means of fulfilling a State’s non-proliferation responsibilities and obligations, while ensuring that the international community can maintain confidence that the trade in nuclear technology and knowledge is exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Mr Chairman,

Australia also recognises the need to ensure that relevant export control guidelines keep pace with technological and other developments. Therefore, following the NSG decision of September 2008 to grant India an exemption to the full scope safeguards requirement in the NSG’s export control guidelines, Australia welcomes India’s engagement with the main export control regimes. Compliance with IAEA safeguards is a prerequisite for the supply of Australian uranium to any country and ensures that Australia’s uranium supply is only ever used for peaceful purposes. Australia continues to abide by NSG rules and to meet its international obligations as a nuclear supplier in accordance with Action 35.

Mr Chairman,

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs) play an important role in strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament regime by establishing regions in which the manufacture, acquisition, possession, stationing and testing of nuclear weapons is prohibited.

As a long-standing supporter of NWFZs, Australia strongly supports the early convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle-East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone. We fully support the Facilitator, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava of Finland, in his ongoing efforts and are encouraged by the recent progress at meetings at Glion, Switzerland. Australia calls upon all States in the region to engage in a spirit of genuine and constructive cooperation as they work towards this important goal.

Mr Chairman,

Compliance with IAEA safeguards obligations is imperative to preserve the integrity of the safeguards system and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and related technology. Australia hopes that the continuing negotiations between the EU3+3 with
Iran under the Joint Plan of Action will lead to the final and comprehensive resolution of Iran’s nuclear issue. We urge Iran to swiftly and steadily implement measures such as the ratification and implementation of an Additional Protocol, to remove international concerns regarding its nuclear activities. We urge Iran to observe the requirement of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and decisions by the IAEA Board of Governors. We fully support the efforts by the EU3 + 3 as well as the IAEA, including the IAEA’s efforts to resolve issues regarding the Possible Military Dimensions of Iran’s nuclear program. We call upon Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA in this respect.

We strongly condemn North Korea’s nuclear, ballistic missile and proliferation programs which undermine the global non-proliferation regime. These programs pose an increasing threat to the stability of our own region, and to international peace and security. We condemn North Korea’s recent rocket launches, particularly those which breached UN Security Council resolutions by using ballistic technology. We deplore efforts by North Korea to restart and expand nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and urge North Korea to cease all nuclear activities immediately. We strongly urge North Korea to comply with its commitments under the 2005 Six-Party Talks Joint Statement and under UN Security Council Resolutions to denuclearise and return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards. We urge North Korea to refrain from further provocations including missile launches, nuclear tests and threats of the use of nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairman,

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is in the interests of all States and should be pursued with vigour and determination. It is telling that in the 43 years of the NPT’s existence, there is only one example of the proliferation of nuclear weapons by an NPT member State. This stands in contrast to the situation prior to the NPT’s establishment, when there were serious concerns that many States would choose to obtain nuclear weapons. But even one new State with nuclear weapons is too many. As we build momentum towards the 2015 Review Conference, Australia is determined to strengthen the NPT to prevent any further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Full implementation of the 2010 NPT Action Plan is central to these efforts.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.