Mr Chairman,

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) contributes fundamentally to international peace and security. It also contributes materially to human development, by providing the international framework that fosters international confidence and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Australia supports States Parties having the right to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful uses within this framework.

We should not overlook how much the world has gained, and continues to gain, from the practical applications of nuclear science and technology. Nor should we lose sight of the importance of continuing to derive that benefit with the full assurance that nuclear activities are being undertaken exclusively for peaceful purposes, and in line with the highest international standards for safety and security.

Mr Chairman,

Today we see the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) working on programs to improve food sustainability; to reduce disease and crop losses through the sterile insect technique; to provide important analytical tools in the management and conservation of existing supplies of water and in the identification of new, renewable sources of water; and to apply nuclear techniques for medical purposes, including diagnosis and treatment of cancer. We applaud that work and encourage all States to support the IAEA through their contributions, including to the Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF), consistent with Actions 52 to 55 of the 2010 NPT Review Conference outcome.

Australia works closely with the IAEA in support of its Technical Cooperation Programme and makes other contributions, including to the Peaceful Uses Initiative. Australia also shares its experience in the safe application of nuclear science and technology with neighbouring countries through arrangements such as the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) for Research, Development and Training in Nuclear
Science and Technology for the Asia-Pacific region, and the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA).

Mr Chairman,

Australia exports uranium to fuel many of the world’s nuclear power reactors, and is a party to numerous bilateral agreements. Through these agreements, Australia works to ensure the widest application of IAEA safeguards and to promote the highest standards of safety and nuclear security.

We encourage those States with research reactors using Highly Enriched Uranium fuel to move to LEU fuel, in accordance with Action 61.

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, through its OPAL reactor and processing facilities in Sydney, is a major contributor to the worldwide supply of molybdenum-99 (the world’s major nuclear medicine), which exclusively uses low-enriched uranium (LEU) targets and fuel. In 2013 when world supplies were stretched for a variety of reasons, Australia was able to export 42,000 patient doses per week to Asia and North America, as well as meeting our own domestic demand. This demonstrates that LEU technology is a viable pathway for the bulk production of molybdenum-99 both now and in the future.

Mr Chairman,

Australia is also developing the use of nuclear techniques in material, environmental and health research through a number of significant infrastructure investments, expanding Australia’s capability in neutron scattering applications. This will greatly enhance capacity in fields as diverse as treatment of cancer and other chronic illnesses, materials research, climate change and environmental science, medical physics and nuclear safeguards.

Australia is a strong supporter of the IAEA’s Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), including through the provision of experts for PACT missions to Pacific Island countries. We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with the IAEA on the cancer control programme.

Mr Chairman,

Nuclear safety and security must remain a high priority for all States. Australia continues to promote the implementation of best practices in nuclear safety and urges all States to apply IAEA Safety Standards, to utilise IAEA peer review services on a regular basis and publish mission reports, and to actively participate in peer review processes conducted under the nuclear safety conventions.

Australia also supports the activities of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, including by chairing the Nuclear Forensics Working Group and conducting regional tabletop exercises in support of the GICNT work programme. At the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague in March 2014, Australia announced a contribution of $1 million dollars in support of the IAEA’s Nuclear Security Fund.
Mr Chairman,

As has often been noted, the three pillars of the NPT: non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses, are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. All States Parties to the NPT have the right to conduct research into, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, that right is coupled with important obligations of nuclear safeguards, security and safety that must be adhered to.

As we build to the 2015 Review Conference, Australia encourages all States to work together to fully implement the 2010 NPT Action Plan. We commend working papers from the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and the Vienna Group of Ten that deal with Cluster III issues. We hope the papers contribute to the debate and help focus delegates’ minds on the importance of Cluster III issues to the health of the NPT.