CONCLUDING STATEMENT TO THE 2005 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE PLENARY

Mr President, Australia is deeply disappointed that delegations were unable to reach consensus on a substantive outcome to this Review Conference. It is most regrettable that the Conference was prevented from commencing substantive discussion by lengthy debate on procedural issues. And that once substantive debate began, there was insufficient time, or in some cases, will, to deal effectively with key issues of interest to all states parties.

It is truly frustrating that states parties have been denied an opportunity here to deal more effectively with the grave proliferation threats we all face. We have also been denied an opportunity to advance nuclear disarmament through such measures as support for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.

At this point Mr President, I should note that Australia, as informal chair of the Vienna Group of 10 which submitted six Working Papers to the Conference – five of which are of immediate relevance to Articles III and IV of the Treaty – is particularly disappointed that the considerable effort the Group put into developing what should have been broadly acceptable language on non-proliferation and peaceful use issues has been thwarted.

At the same time, Mr President, it is important to underline today that the failure to agree here a substantive outcome does not touch the continuing fundamental value of the NPT to international peace and security. Let us recall that with 189 states parties, the NPT continues to be the most widely supported multilateral arms control treaty in existence. And it has established an international norm that outlaws the spread of nuclear weapons and provides a framework for their eventual disappearance entirely.

Mr President, notwithstanding our disappointment at this meeting’s outcome, Australia stands ready to redouble its efforts with other states parties to tackle on-going proliferation challenges, both within associated forums and organisations such as the IAEA and the United Nations, and in the preparation process for the next Review Conference of the NPT in 2010.

Thank you, Mr President.