THE NINTH REVIEW OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
4 May 2015

Main Committee II

Statement by Mr. Darren Hansen
First Secretary
Australian Mission to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

Mr Chairman

I congratulate you on your election. It is an honour to be given the opportunity to address this committee on Australia’s behalf.

Mr Chairman

Australia firmly supports the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. For the past 45 years, this Treaty has provided important security benefits to all States. Our collective commitment to the Treaty has prevented a global nuclear arms race and contained the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We must continue to reaffirm our support for the norms established by the Treaty.
A country pursuing nuclear proliferation activities could threaten international peace and security, threaten the integrity of the NPT and potentially undermine the global non-proliferation architecture. In this regard, Australia remains deeply concerned by the actions of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) which, alone among nations in the twenty-first century, maintains an active nuclear explosive testing program, challenging the non-proliferation regime and contravening the international norm that has already been established by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We strongly urge the DPRK to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and to return to compliance with its IAEA safeguards agreement and the NPT. No States Parties should be silent on this matter.

On a more positive note, Australia welcomes the announcement of a framework between the E3+3 and Iran on the parameters of a comprehensive agreement over Iran’s nuclear program on 2 April 2015. This is an important step in progress towards a final agreement that we hope will address international concerns about Iran’s nuclear program. We urge Iran to engage constructively with the E3+3 to complete the negotiations for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by the end of June.

Australia has been a strong supporter of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) since its inception in 1957. The IAEA safeguards system provides an essential service to the NPT and the international community. It provides a practical means by which non-nuclear-weapon States can demonstrate their commitment to use nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, while providing assurance that others are doing the same.
The assurance the safeguards system delivers is not only essential to preventing nuclear weapons proliferation, but also fundamental to ensuring confidence in trade and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and an important factor in continuing progress on nuclear disarmament. The IAEA needs to receive adequate resources if safeguards are to remain an effective instrument for verification, as required by the NPT.

Consistent with Actions 25 and 28 of the 2010 Action Plan, Australia calls on all states yet to conclude and implement a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol with the IAEA to do so without delay. The combination of a CSA and AP represents the verification standard of the Treaty. But safeguards are not static. As agreed at the 1995 and 2010 RevCons, safeguards should be continually assessed. The Agency should therefore be supported in taking steps to ensure safeguards remain effective.

Mr Chairman

Australia recognises the need to ensure that relevant export control guidelines keep pace with technological and other developments. As part of these efforts and consistent with Australia’s position as a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), we urge all States Parties to establish, maintain and implement effective export controls over nuclear and nuclear-related dual-use items and technology. In addition, we encourage all States Parties to harmonise their export controls with those of the NSG and Zangger Committee guidelines.

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 encourage all interested States Parties in the region to engage in a spirit of genuine and constructive cooperation to convene a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone conference.

Mr Chairman

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is in the interests of all States and should be pursued with vigour, resilience and determination. It is central to the NPT’s continuing relevance. It is our shared responsibility to support new initiatives to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime and ensure that no more States or non-State actors ever acquire nuclear weapons.

Finally, Australia commends to you the recommendations of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) which are contained in the joint working paper submitted to this conference.

Thank you Mr Chairman.