



AUSTRALIA



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UNITED NATIONS THIRD PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2005 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

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CLUSTER III ISSUES

**Statement by
Mr John Page, Executive Officer,
Arms Control Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.**

Mr Chairman, in the interests of brevity I will confine my comments to a few key Cluster III issues.

Australia has a long record of demonstrated strong commitment to peaceful nuclear cooperation. We regard the peaceful nuclear cooperation provisions of Article IV as an essential part of the balance of rights and obligations states assume under the Treaty. Australia's pledge to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Fund is paid in full each year. Australia also contributes significant extra-budgetary funding to the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA).

Access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes is a key benefit of adherence to the NPT but is not unconditional, and is subject to the Treaty's overall non-proliferation objectives. Article IV.1 of the Treaty makes this clear by linking the peaceful nuclear energy provisions to conformity with Articles I and II.

Recent events have highlighted the risk of states misusing the NPT's peaceful nuclear energy provisions to acquire the technical basis for a nuclear weapons program. Both IAEA Director General ElBaradei and US President Bush have identified a need to address this risk and have suggested possible ways to limit the spread of proliferation-sensitive technology. Australia supports development of an international dialogue on limiting the spread of sensitive technology which, if left untended, could erode the security benefits of the NPT. We would note that consideration of this issue is not a question of reinterpreting the NPT but of ensuring that actions by NPT parties are true to the Treaty's intent and to the global non-proliferation norm. Pending the development of an appropriate international framework to limit the spread of sensitive technology states may wish to consider a moratorium on any new enrichment or reprocessing plants.

Mr Chairman

Uncovering of the Khan proliferation network has again underscored the fundamental importance of preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear materials, equipment, technology

and know how. Increased cooperation among states and with the IAEA is needed to break down the existing nuclear blackmarket and ensure there is no recurrence. Exposure of the Khan network also underscored the central non-proliferation role of effective national controls on sensitive materials and technology. A national system of nuclear security in the recipient state, including legal measures against illicit trafficking, should be a pre-condition for transfers of nuclear material, sensitive equipment and technology.

Australia greatly appreciates the IAEA's assistance to Member States with combating illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and other radioactive substances including strengthening of regulatory controls. Cooperation at the state level also has an important part to play in combating illicit trafficking.

Better tracking and protection of radioactive sources is a priority. Australia welcomes adoption by the IAEA Board of Governors of a revised action plan on the safety and security of radioactive sources in September 2003. We also welcome adoption by the IAEA Board of Governors and General Conference of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources in September 2003, and support early implementation of the Code by all States. The PrepCom should call upon all NPT parties to support the Code and write to the IAEA Director-General as called for by the 2003 IAEA General Conference. The PrepCom should also encourage early completion of the guidance for the export and import of sources under the Code.

Mr Chairman

All countries share an interest in ensuring that peaceful nuclear activities are carried out in accordance with the highest international standards of safety and security. In our immediate region, South Pacific countries are concerned about the maritime transfer of nuclear materials through their region. Shipping States can point to nuclear materials having been shipped around the world without incident for over 30 years and the minimal risk of actual damage in the unlikely event of an accident. Nevertheless, Pacific Islands Forum member countries expect shipping states to ensure the safety of such shipments, and many are pressing for a guarantee of compensation should they suffer economic loss in the event of an incident, even one in which no radiation is released. As a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia will continue to encourage, and participate in, discussions between Forum members and shipping States to explore ways to address particular concerns of regional States. We welcome the IAEA's contribution on shipments issues and in this regard endorse the draft IAEA Action Plan on the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material, released in February 2004.

Mr Chairman

Australia will maintain its strong contribution to the peaceful application of nuclear energy. The commitment of NPT parties to the highest standards of non-proliferation, nuclear safety and security remains central to the climate of confidence and trust essential for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.