

**Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**  
**First Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2010 Review Conference**  
**Vienna, 30 April – 11 May 2007**

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**Statement**

*delivered in the General Debate by*  
H.E. Caroline Millar  
Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, Ambassador for Disarmament

Thank you Mr Chairman.

The Australian delegation warmly congratulates you on your appointment as Chairman and looks forward to working with you.

For almost four decades the NPT has rightfully been at the centre of regional and global security architecture. No multilateral treaty has done as much to strengthen our collective and national security. But in a climate of renewed concern about horizontal proliferation, and with work still to be done on nuclear disarmament and peaceful nuclear energy issues, the lack of agreed outcomes at the 2005 Review Conference did the Treaty a great disservice. We urge all NPT parties to grasp the opportunities offered by a new review cycle.

It is inevitable that there will be differing viewpoints and priorities within the NPT's membership. But there is also much agreement. Good progress was made on most issues in the brief time available for substantive work at the 2005 Review Conference. This solid body of agreement was exemplified also by the declaration on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agreed by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Norway, Romania, South Africa and the UK in July 2005, and subsequently supported by around seventy countries. NPT parties' common outlook is evident also in the conclusion reached by the overwhelming majority of countries that their security interests are best served by renouncing nuclear weapons, joining the NPT and complying faithfully with NPT and IAEA obligations.

The NPT is often described as a bargain between the nuclear-weapon states and the non-nuclear-weapon states. In fact, it is a three-way bargain. The commitment non-nuclear-weapon states give to their fellow non-nuclear-weapon states – that they will not acquire or develop nuclear weapons – is an essential part of the NPT. If confidence in this commitment faltered, strategically damaging and economically debilitating regional nuclear arms races could result, harming all our interests.

NPT parties should reject any notion that the NPT is the type of bargain where the interests of some parties are pitted against the countervailing interests of other parties. Australia shares the view of Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General, who stated in his report *In larger freedom*: 'Progress in both disarmament and non-proliferation is essential and neither should be held hostage to the other'.

Mr Chairman

The nuclear non-proliferation situation has deteriorated since we last met. North Korea's nuclear test of 9 October 2006 directly challenged the fundamental principles of non-proliferation at the heart of the NPT. For the first time, a country which joined the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon state has acquired a nuclear explosive capability. Australia hopes that the six-party statement released on 13 February 2007 indicates North Korea has made the strategic choice to give up nuclear weapons. North Korea must now match with practical action the commitments it has given.

The North Korea case illustrates the risk of NPT parties acquiring nuclear technology then leaving the Treaty to pursue nuclear weapons. Australia believes NPT parties should agree on measures to strengthen disincentives to withdrawal and to ensure an appropriate response in any cases. We were encouraged by the very constructive discussion on NPT withdrawal issues at the 2005 Review Conference.

Iran's determined pursuit of uranium enrichment without any convincing peaceful justification and in defiance of resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors and the UN Security Council seriously threatens confidence in the non-proliferation regime. Iran's failure to cooperate fully with IAEA inspections, and to answer the Agency's outstanding questions about its past activities, only further reduces international confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities. The international community should not be misled. No-one wants to deny Iran its legitimate rights to peaceful nuclear energy. But, as recognised in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, peaceful use rights are not unconditional and must be in conformity with Articles I, II and III of the Treaty.

Iran's nuclear program has refocused international attention on ways to limit the spread of enrichment and reprocessing technologies while respecting rights to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Australia supports the current extensive international dialogue on nuclear fuel cycle issues. In our view multilateral approaches and initiatives on the nuclear fuel cycle have the potential to advance both energy security and non-proliferation objectives.

We welcome the continued growth in numbers of Additional Protocols to IAEA safeguards agreements. There should be no doubt that a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an Additional Protocol is the verification standard for non-nuclear-weapon states that would best guarantee the NPT's long-term effectiveness. Australia has made the Additional Protocol a condition for the supply of Australian uranium to non-nuclear-weapon states. We urge all other uranium suppliers to do likewise.

Mr Chairman

A credible nuclear-weapon state commitment to nuclear disarmament is essential for maintaining the NPT's political strength and vitality. There has been progress on nuclear arms reductions – those who claim otherwise deny reality – but much remains to be done towards the goal of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

We look to the nuclear-weapon states to identify areas for progress, such as further reductions in all types of nuclear weapons and in the operational status of nuclear weapon systems. A diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies is important in order to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons. Security assurances against the threat or use of nuclear weapons have been of key interest to non-nuclear-weapon states for many years. Australia places great importance on nuclear weapon free zones as an effective means by which negative security assurances can be provided to non-nuclear-weapon states parties to the NPT.

The debate on NPT disarmament issues will be most productive if it is well informed. We encourage all nuclear-weapon states to be as transparent and open as possible about their nuclear weapons policies and disarmament actions. We appreciate the useful reports on nuclear disarmament issues the nuclear-weapon states have provided for this and other fora.

Australia expects the nuclear-weapon states to pursue NPT nuclear disarmament commitments vigorously and with determination. But we accept that achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world will take many steps. In this regard, non-nuclear-weapon state actions are fundamental to the environment of confidence and stability that will foster progress on nuclear disarmament. Such actions include ensuring an effective nuclear non-proliferation regime and strong support for reinforcing mechanisms such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

A viable means to make practical progress on a number of a number of key issues, especially the FMCT, is offered by the draft program of work proposed by the six presidents of the 2007 session of the Conference on Disarmament on 23 March 2007. We urge all CD members to support the six presidents' proposal.

Mr Chairman

The NPT's undiminished relevance is further underscored by the renewed global interest in nuclear energy for electricity generation. The Treaty both facilitates access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and provides the non-proliferation assurances essential to peaceful nuclear trade and cooperation. The record on peaceful nuclear cooperation is a good one, characterised by large-scale and effective assistance through the IAEA's Technical Co-operation Programme as well as the IAEA Regional Cooperative Agreements. The IAEA's work has enabled many countries to access the benefits of nuclear technology in a wide range of areas from food and agriculture and human health to industry and resource management.

Australia has demonstrated its commitment to cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by active participation over the NPT's history in multilateral, regional and bilateral peaceful nuclear cooperation activities. As the holder of around 40 percent of the world's low-cost uranium reserves and the world's second largest uranium exporter, Australia is a major contributor to nuclear energy worldwide. We participate in a vibrant exchange of information and experts, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Australian nuclear science and technology entered a new era on 20 April with the opening of OPAL, Australia's world-class research reactor supplied by the Argentine company INVAP.

Mr Chairman

As we begin another review process we need to be ready to engage constructively on the concerns of all NPT parties. At the same time we need to be realistic, working together to identify areas of convergence where practical action can be taken to strengthen operation of the Treaty across all three pillars – non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses. We will need to focus not on the differences within the NPT's membership, but on what unites us.

Finally, Mr Chairman, in this fiftieth anniversary year for the IAEA. Australia records its sincere gratitude to the Agency and all those who have served it. The Nobel prize awarded to the Agency and its Director General was due recognition of the IAEA's fundamental contribution to the NPT and to global security. Australia has been a strong supporter of the IAEA from the outset, having been one of the countries that prepared the draft Statute in 1957 and a member of the Board of Governors since the Agency's inception. We look forward to continuing our close association with the IAEA over the next fifty years.