



# AUSTRALIA

## **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

### **Second Session of the Preparatory Committee**

#### **Statement on Cluster Three Issues**

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Mr Chairman

Australia enjoys the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology and is proud of its record of supporting the right of other NPT parties to share those benefits.

Since 1958, the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) and its predecessor organisations have been applying nuclear techniques to deliver benefits to Australia in critical areas such as agriculture, manufacturing, minerals, construction, human health and the environment.

In relation to nuclear power, Australia recognises that each country makes its energy choices based on its national circumstances. While nuclear power is a viable option for some countries, the Australian Government's view is that our country does not need nuclear power as part of its energy mix.

For other countries - particularly those that lack the energy resources and options we enjoy - nuclear power may be a viable option. Australian uranium can contribute to meeting those countries' energy needs and thus enhancing their energy security. Australia holds close to 40 per cent of the world's low-cost uranium reserves and is a major uranium supplier to the global nuclear power industry. This is one of the ways in which Australia implements its Article IV undertaking to facilitate the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Australia also implements its Article IV undertaking by assisting the IAEA in contributing to the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within developing states. Last year we were the eleventh largest contributor to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund.

In addition, Australia contributes significant extra-budgetary funding to the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific (RCA). RCA projects have contributed to regional socio-economic development in areas such as food and agriculture, health care, industry and environmental protection. Notable RCA success stories in 2007 included projects aimed at training technical specialist in nuclear medicine through distance education, and using nuclear techniques to better understand water resources and sources of air pollution.

We are pleased that ANSTO has been designated an IAEA Collaborating Centre for Neutron Scattering Applications, in recognition of its nuclear capabilities and strong regional interaction.

Mr Chairman

NPT parties that comply fully with the Treaty's non-proliferation and verification requirements under Articles I, II and III of the Treaty, have every right to benefit from peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

But that right is not unqualified. Any State that violates its non-proliferation and safeguards obligations isolates itself from the benefits of the NPT.

Australia recognises the need for states with nuclear power programs to have a secure and reliable supply of fuel. We believe a well functioning market provides an effective assurance of fuel supply and a practical alternative to the acquisition of enrichment and reprocessing technologies. At the same time, we are interested in exploring ways of enhancing this assurance through multilateral approaches which might help avoid the unnecessary spread of proliferation-sensitive technologies.

Mr Chairman

Two key factors that underpin the long-term assurance and stability of international trade in nuclear materials and technology for peaceful purposes are the international safeguards system and nuclear export control regimes.

Supply arrangements should take into account the evolutionary strengthening of the IAEA's safeguards system. In this regard, Australia has made an Additional Protocol a condition for supplying Australian uranium to non-nuclear-weapon states. We urge others to do the same.

Effective national controls over the export of sensitive technology and materials, and international coordination in the application of national laws, are a legitimate and necessary means for States to implement their obligations under Article III.2 of the Treaty, and under UN Security Council resolution 1540. Far from impeding legitimate nuclear trade and cooperation, export controls foster the necessary environment of long-term assurance and stability necessary for peaceful nuclear cooperation.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group and Zangger Committee have developed harmonised export controls to facilitate responsible nuclear trade and cooperation, while minimising proliferation risks. All States should ensure their nuclear export controls are consistent with the major nuclear export control regimes, and are strictly enforced.

Another key factor in the successful development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is States' adherence to internationally accepted standards of nuclear safety and security – including those set out in relevant conventions and codes of conduct.

Australia urges all States that have yet to become party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety to do so – particularly those planning nuclear power reactors. Australia stresses the important role of the IAEA in enhancing nuclear, radiation, waste and transport safety through its programs and services. We welcome the work of the Commission on Safety Standards in overseeing the preparation of internationally recognised safety standards and guides.

Australia recognises that regional networks play a valuable role in building safety culture, developing skills and sharing lessons learned, and for these reasons we are an active participant in the Asian Nuclear Safety Network.

Mr Chairman

Australia takes seriously the potential threats posed by nuclear terrorism or misuse of radioactive sources. This year we contributed \$200,000 to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund bringing our total contribution to that fund to \$750,000.

We urge States that have not done so to adhere to the *Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism*; adhere to the *Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material* and ratify the strengthening amendment adopted in 2005; implement the *Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources* and act in accordance with the supplementary *Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources*.

We encourage States to work towards minimisation of highly enriched uranium (HEU) in civil applications, including radiopharmaceutical production.

Mr Chairman

Public acceptance is a significant component in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Australia believes having effective liability mechanisms is an important element in building public confidence in the nuclear industry. We welcome the valuable work of the IAEA's International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability (INLEX).

In Australia's region, some South Pacific countries have concerns about the safety of maritime transport of radioactive materials. Radioactive materials have been shipped around the world without incident for over 30 years, and Pacific Island Forum countries reasonably expect shipping states to ensure this exemplary record continues. Australia will continue to engage in discussions between Forum members and shipping states to explore ways to address particular concerns.

It is important that unwarranted national or local bans or restrictions do not impede shipments of nuclear and radioactive materials carried out in conformity with transport safety regulations. Australia is pleased the IAEA is addressing denial of shipment issues and that an International Steering Committee has been established to coordinate international efforts.

Mr Chairman

The commitment of NPT parties to the highest standards of non-proliferation, safety and security remains central to the climate of confidence and trust essential for cooperation and exchange concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Australia will apply such standards as we continue to make a significant contribution to the peaceful application of nuclear energy in accordance with our NPT commitments.