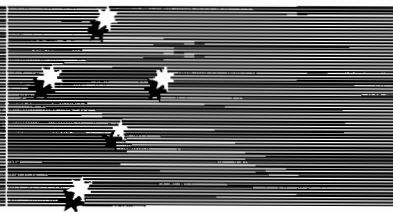




AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

First Committee

17 October 2007

Thematic Debate: Nuclear Weapons

Statement by Mr Craig Maclachlan, Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

(Check against delivery)

Mr Chairman

Australia regards the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the foundation of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

So we were greatly encouraged by the positive and cooperative atmosphere fostered by the overwhelming majority of delegations participating in the First PrepCom of the 2007-2010 Review Cycle.

That meeting, in reaffirming the vital significance of the NPT, has gone some distance to overcoming the disappointment of the last RevCon.

But it will require continued cooperation and determination on the part of all states to ensure the NPT continues to make progress toward ensuring a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairman

Australia is committed to achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament through balanced, progressive and reinforcing steps.

We look to the nuclear-weapon states to take the lead through lasting reductions of their nuclear weapons. Australia is encouraged by the steps that some nuclear-weapon states have taken in this direction, and we urge them to continue.

But the non-nuclear weapon states must also play their part in creating the environment of confidence and stability in which nuclear disarmament can take place.

We also welcome increased transparency of some nuclear weapon states, including through statements to the recent NPT PrepCom and the Conference on Disarmament's focused debate on nuclear disarmament.

We encourage all states possessing nuclear weapons to undertake such transparency efforts to the fullest extent possible.

We also look to all states possessing nuclear weapons to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their security policies, thereby lowering the risk that these weapons might ever be used, and advancing their eventual elimination.

And we urge these states to reduce further the operational status of their nuclear weapons in ways that promote global security and stability.

Mr Chairman

Non-nuclear weapon states have a fundamental interest and duty to support practical steps that will facilitate nuclear disarmament.

Australia is a committed party to the South Pacific Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

It is regrettable that after a decade, there remain ten Annex II states still to become party to the CTBT – we call on these states to act without delay, thereby strengthening the multilateral nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

We actively support negotiation of a legally binding, non-discriminatory Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty that provides for appropriate measures to verify compliance.

In this regard, the CD presidents' L.1 proposal is a fair basis for proceeding with substantive work, including negotiations of an FMCT.

We urge all CD members to seize this opportunity so that we can get on with this urgent task.

Australia also adheres strictly to the NPT-based non-proliferation regime, through domestic controls and support for global measures like the Additional Protocol, strengthened nuclear security, and efforts against nuclear terrorism.

Such measures are essential, for without complete and permanent assurances of non-proliferation, there will not be a world free of nuclear weapons.

We should be clear – states that challenge the non-proliferation regime not only threaten global security but also undermine the international confidence and stability essential to achieving nuclear disarmament.

We welcome Iran's stated intent to work with the IAEA to resolve long outstanding issues.

But it should follow through on this by suspending its uranium enrichment program as required by the Security Council and cooperate fully with the IAEA.

Such actions are essential if the international community is to be assured that Iran's nuclear program is indeed for peaceful purposes.

Australia welcomes the progress on the DPRK nuclear issue, most recently the 3 October agreement on second-phase action under the 2005 Joint Statement.

We look to the DPRK and other Six-Party Talks participants to implement their commitments and maintain the positive momentum they have established.

Mr Chairman

Australia welcomes the steps being taken on nuclear disarmament, but seeks further progress towards this vital goal.

We remain gravely concerned about the nuclear proliferation threat to global security, yet encouraged that the overwhelming majority of states remain committed to fulfilling their non-proliferation obligations.

And we are certain that progress on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are fundamental to enduring global peace and security.

I thank you.