



# AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## FIRST COMMITTEE

9 OCTOBER 2007

# GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENT

## Statement by H.E. Robert Hill, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

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Mr Chairman

Australia's delegation congratulates you on your appointment as Chair of the First Committee. We look forward to working with you to ensure this meeting is a success.

Since this committee last met, the international community has made welcome, albeit in some cases, modest gains in multilateral arms control fora.

States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention held a successful review conference at which they committed to universalise its implementation, aided by a strengthened support unit.

The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the 2010 Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference reaffirmed that treaty's vital importance to global security.

The Conference on Disarmament saw an overwhelming and cross-regional majority support the fair and balanced proposal by the six Presidents to return the CD to work – and negotiation of an FMCT.

And the international community signalled through a record number of submissions to the Secretary General its determination to realise an Arms Trade Treaty.

Yet multilateral arms control fora are still not living up to the expectations placed upon them – as the CD's inability to overcome the objections of a few states attests.

Worse still, some treaties face internal challenges, the most serious of which are cases of non-compliance that remain unresolved, long after the international community rightfully sought redress.

Mr Chairman

Multilateral arms control regimes are fundamental to international security. And support from other institutions and regimes can help them achieve their objectives.

In this regard, Australia welcomes the Security Council's engagement in the most significant issues confronting international security.

Such leadership is vital to ensuring a satisfactory conclusion to unresolved issues, most notably Iran's non-compliance with its NPT and IAEA safeguard obligations and the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs.

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 maintain the positive momentum they have established.

The Security Council has also helped through resolutions like UNSCR 1540 to raise the bar against the proliferation of the most destructive weapons to terrorists and others.

Australia counts UNSCR 1540 - along with the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, export control regimes and the IAEA Additional Protocol - among the practically-focused initiatives that have helped to strengthen international security.

A decade ago, another practically-focused initiative helped to bring about the negotiation and adoption of the Mine Ban Convention.

The Convention has stemmed the tide of suffering caused by landmines, by banning a heinous weapon class and providing a framework for assistance.

Australia looks forward to the panel on the Convention's impact on 23 October.

As President of the Meeting of States Parties, Australia, with President-Designate Jordan and preceding President Croatia, will reintroduce a resolution on the Convention to this Committee.

Australia will also re-introduce its resolution on preventing the illicit transfer and unauthorised access to and use of Man Portable Air Defence Systems.

The consensus support given to this resolution in previous years reflects the depth of international concern about the threat from terrorists using such weapons.

This year's resolution will continue its practical focus on strengthening of controls over MANPADS, thereby helping to prevent their misuse and contributing to international security.

Mr Chairman

Since our last meeting, international concern with the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions has galvanized into action.

Australia is committed to addressing this issue through the dual tracks of the CCW and Oslo processes.

We urge CCW States Parties to agree a mandate for negotiations next month.

Mr Chairman

Last year, Australia urged this Committee to develop effective resolutions to enable the international community to address emerging threats to peace and security.

Australia was thus delighted with the overwhelming support given to resolution 61/89 on an Arms Trade Treaty, of which it was a co-author, and the subsequent record number of submissions to the Secretary General.

A well crafted, legally binding instrument would help prevent irresponsible transfers, while providing greater assurances for legitimate trade.

The 2008 GGE will provide a good opportunity to explore further the scope, feasibility and draft parameters of a treaty.

Mr Chairman

Australia hopes that this session of the First Committee will again agree focused and effective resolutions that strengthen international security.

We look forward to working with you and other delegations toward that end.

I thank you.