

UNGA 63 First Committee

Australia's explanation of Vote – Risk of Proliferation in the Middle East (L.2)

Mr Chairman

I have requested the floor to set out the reasons for Australia's position on resolution L.2 entitled "The Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

Australia is committed to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and to the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world. As a strong support of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, we will continue to promote these objectives in the current NPT Review Cycle and at all other relevant international fora.

Our strong advocacy for a universal NPT and the universal application of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, including the Additional Protocol, is a matter of record.

Australia has long been a supporter of effectively verifiable nuclear weapon-free zones freely arrived at by member states – we have been consistent in our support of the UN General Assembly resolution which calls for the establishment of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East.

However, a resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" that singles out Israel and does not include a reference to the other Middle East states of proliferation concern – two of whom are currently under investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency – is, in our view, an unbalanced resolution and we therefore regrettably had to abstain.

Thank you.