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United Nations Security Council
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Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

**Statement by HE the Hon Robert Hill
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations**

(Check against delivery)

Australia welcomes this opportunity to discuss Security Council resolutions 1540 and 1673 concerning the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). We strongly support Security Council efforts to prevent WMD proliferation, and encourage the Council to be as active as possible in this regard.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 1540 was an historic achievement. It was the first international instrument to place obligations on all States to take comprehensive action to prevent the proliferation of WMD, their means of delivery, and related materials in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

The resolution specifically focused on the risk to all States of non-State actors obtaining WMD. It makes strong national controls on WMD-related material and technologies, and the enforcement of such controls, a requirement for all States. These measures are no longer merely an option for States to consider.

Resolution 1540 required all member States of the UN to submit a report on the steps they have taken, or intend to take, to implement the resolution. Resolution 1673 called upon States that had not yet presented a report to the 1540 Committee to do so without delay. It is only through the submission of these reports that the international community can see where States have gaps in their domestic controls, or require assistance to better respond to the changing security environment. It is a matter of regret that some States have still not been able to submit their reports to the 1540 Committee.

Australia recognised that some States might require assistance in implementing the provisions of resolution 1540. This is recognised in the resolution itself. Australia has already provided such assistance bilaterally, and in conjunction with our regional neighbours, including through the Pacific Islands Forum.

We are of course willing to continue to provide such assistance to ensure States have the legal and regulatory infrastructure, capacity, and experience to fulfil the provisions of resolution 1540. The resolution does not specify how its provisions should be implemented, instead leaving it up to individual States to decide the best means for doing so according to their national legal framework. The resolution does, though, define the goal, being to prevent non-State actors from obtaining WMD. Australia encourages the 1540 Committee to continue its program of outreach in support of this goal.

In addition to domestic action by States, there are also a range of international regimes that address the issues covered by resolution 1540. Not all of these international regimes are suitable or appropriate for all States to join, but they demonstrate the ways in which resolution 1540 operates interactively with a range of other international non-proliferation and safeguards regimes.

For example, resolution 1540 requires States to adopt controls on brokering activities. For most States, this is a relatively new field, but it has become increasingly clear in the current security environment that controls on brokering activities involving conventional, military, and WMD-related goods have an important role to play in preventing proliferation. The Australia Group has commenced discussion on brokering activities, as have other non-proliferation and safeguards regimes.

The Republic of Korea has now taken the initiative to host an international seminar on brokering controls in Seoul at the end of March, to which members of non-proliferation and safeguards regimes will be invited, as well as other regional participants. Australia is proud to be co-chairing this important seminar with our Korean colleagues.

I must mention one other important, indeed essential, international tool which reinforces the goals of resolution 1540. Australia is a participant in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) which aims to prevent trafficking in WMD, their delivery systems, and related material to and from States, and non-State actors, of proliferation concern. The PSI Statement of Principles makes clear that all PSI activities will be consistent with national legal authorities and international frameworks. Over 80 states have endorsed the PSI. I hope all States will seriously consider endorsing the PSI to give it global coverage.

Thank you, Mr President.