



AUSTRALIA

Conference on Disarmament

**Statement by Caroline Millar
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Madam President

I congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency and look forward to working with you.

I would also like to thank your predecessor Ambassador Duncan and members of the P6 for their work to date. You can be assured of the Australian delegation's continuing full support.

Madam President

I take the floor today to inform this Conference of an announcement made by the Australian Prime Minister Mr Rudd on 9 June 2008 in a speech in Kyoto, Japan, on the establishment of an International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

In a Joint Statement of 12 June 2008, Prime Minister Rudd and Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of Japan renewed their determination to strengthen the international disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and to cooperate closely to achieve a successful outcome to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Australia has long taken a leading role on arms control and disarmament, including through the establishment of the Australia Group, the convening of the Canberra Commission, our contribution to strengthening the nuclear safeguards system, and our work in the United Nations on the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament will follow-up on the important work undertaken by the Canberra Commission and the Tokyo Forum in the 1990s.

The Commission's findings will be considered by a major international conference of experts, sponsored by Australia, in late 2009.

The objective of the Commission is to enhance global efforts to strengthen the NPT by paving the way for a successful Review Conference in 2010.

The Commission will be co-chaired by International Crisis Group head Gareth Evans, who as former Australian Foreign Minister supervised the work of the Canberra Commission.

We expect that Commissioners will be senior international experts from a range of countries. Australia and Japan are bilaterally consulting on the specific terms of cooperation for the Commission.

I hope to provide the CD with further information on the Commission before the end of the 2008 session.

Madam President

I should also like to take this opportunity to voice my delegation's full support for the 2008 P6 proposal on a program of work contained in document CD/1840.

This proposal builds on the excellent work conducted by last year's P6, culminating in the L.1 proposal. My delegation also strongly supported the L.1 proposal.

Document CD/1840 represents a balanced and well-considered proposal for commencing our work. You and your P6 colleagues have conducted wide and good-faith consultations on this proposal.

It does not prejudice any countries' position on any core issue. And it allows us to commence meaningful work on all four core issues.

Australia joins the many delegations that have already spoken in support of document CD/1840 this year.

Madam President

Australia finds it difficult to accept the prospect that this Conference will for another year fail to fulfil its mandate.

The vast majority of delegations in this room support your proposal. We urge those few states who have not yet accepted it to reconsider urgently their positions.

For it is not acceptable by any standard that the world's principal forum for negotiations on arms control and disarmament is still unable to commence substantive work.