

**UN Disarmament Commission**

10 April 2006

**General Debate****Statement by Caroline Millar  
Ambassador and  
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.  
of Australia to the United Nations****(Check against delivery)**

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Mr Chair,

There is broad agreement that the United Nations must be responsive to the contemporary environment. That applies to this body, the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as much as any other. We are pleased the UNDC has again started work. But meetings are not an end in themselves. The UNDC needs now to show it can help address today's most pressing international security concerns.

There can be no doubt that the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is among the gravest threats confronting the international community.

The international security environment has changed markedly since the end of the Cold War. Globalisation has increased the opportunities for states to acquire or develop WMD. Moreover, with the rise of trans-national terrorism, we confront the menace of terrorists fulfilling their desire to obtain and use WMD. In this complex global environment, our strategies must be multidimensional, making full use of the range of tools developed to curb the spread of WMD.

Mr Chair,

Australia is a strong supporter of multilateral approaches to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. The major treaties and measures such as UNSCR 1540 are central to maintaining shared international standards in this area. We also strongly support practical measures that reinforce the multilateral treaties, such as the export control regimes. We have readily embraced the Proliferation



Security Initiative as an important new means to strengthen international cooperation on combating WMD proliferation.

Like others, we consider that progress on nuclear disarmament is vital to the continued political strength and vitality of the NPT. But measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime – which benefit all states – must not be held hostage to movement on other NPT issues, important as they might be. Moreover, it is impossible to conceive of a world free of nuclear weapons in the absence of complete and permanent assurances of non-proliferation.

In a climate of concern about the prospect of renewed horizontal nuclear proliferation there should be no question of the urgency of universal application of the IAEA's strengthened safeguards system – the Additional Protocol. It is clear that the Additional Protocol, together with a comprehensive safeguards agreement, is the safeguards standard needed to maintain the integrity of the IAEA safeguards system. We urge all states yet to sign or ratify an Additional Protocol to take prompt action in this regard.

The uncontrolled proliferation of conventional arms has adverse effects on the security and stability of many countries, including within our region. We know only too well the significant costs and destabilising impact of the uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons (SALW). Australia looks forward to the Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action, and we encourage all Member States to engage constructively to ensure effective implementation of its aims.

In addition to national measures to curb SALW proliferation, we also see value in encouraging regional approaches to implement the Programme of Action, which can develop effective means of addressing common concerns, such as sustainable peace-building, and security sector reform. A regional approach also provides particular scope for targeted capacity-building in accordance with the specific requirements of the recipient state.

While much has been done to address the humanitarian tragedy caused by landmines, much more remains to be done, not only in clearing mine areas, but also in rehabilitating affected individuals and communities, and preventing further use of these weapons, particularly by non-State Actors. As President-Designate of this year's Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, Australia urges all states which have yet to do so to ratify or accede to the Convention, and we warmly encourage non-States Parties to participate in the MSP as observers.



Mr Chair,

Like many other countries, Australia is very concerned about the threat to civil aviation if terrorists or other non-state actors acquire and use shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, or Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS). Australia has already played a leading role in international efforts to counter the proliferation of shoulder-fired missiles. In 2004, the General Assembly unanimously adopted an Australian-sponsored resolution on MANPADS, which encourages UN member states to introduce or strengthen measures to ban the transfer of MANPADS to non-state actors, including terrorist and criminal groups. Last year we were again the lead sponsor of a strengthened version of the resolution, once again adopted unanimously.

As Plenary Chair of the Wassenaar Arrangement in 2006 we will shortly commence outreach to selected non-Wassenaar countries. Australia is also taking forward over the next few years an international diplomatic initiative to heighten awareness of the MANPADS threat and encourage states to put in place more effective controls over the manufacture, storage and transfer of MANPADS. In October this year as part of our national initiative we plan to hold an awareness-raising seminar in New York, which will deal with technical aspects, the scope of proliferation, current policy responses and future measures, including strengthening national implementation.

Thank you, Mr Chair.