



AUSTRALIA



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NPT Preparatory Committee
2 May 2019

Cluster 1 (Disarmament) Statement

**Statement by Vanessa Wood, Counsellor, Australian Delegation
to the Conference on Disarmament**

As delivered

Chair,

The NPT is the indispensable framework for nuclear disarmament. Australia has a proud track record of supporting the NPT to advance work towards the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The environment in which we undertake this work is not stagnant, but ever evolving.

The geo-strategic turbulence of recent years has seen increasing strategic competition and challenges to arms control regimes.

Chair

Australia is committed to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of North Korea, as required by multiple UN Security Council resolutions

We welcome dialogue but until concrete steps to denuclearise are taken, the international community should maintain pressure on North Korea.

Chair,

We call for strong leadership to further the progress achieved on disarmament since the Cold War.

Like others, Australia strongly urges that the New START arrangements between the US and the Russian Federation be extended.

On INF, we are disappointed that Russia has so far failed to address its non-compliance. We urge Russia to return to verifiable compliance in the time available.

The challenges facing the INF Treaty remind us of the critical importance for stability of every member of the global community upholding the international rules-based order – including through compliance with treaty obligations.

Chair

Our view is that patience, pragmatism and practicality – a “progressive approach” – is the most sustainable, realistic way forward on disarmament.

This includes tangible efforts on:

- disarmament verification;
- a treaty banning production of fissile material for nuclear weapons;
- increasing transparency and other risk reduction measures;

- and on strengthening the norm against nuclear testing through the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

We support the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification which is working through the technical challenges of disarmament. We look forward to the report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on verification.

Australia was pleased to contribute to efforts to address the technical issues surrounding a treaty banning fissile material for nuclear weapons through two UN-mandated groups. Discussions on this subject last year in the Conference on Disarmament were productive. We regret these are not continuing this year. We look forward to exploring next steps at the side-event on Thursday.

Enhancing transparency is necessary to build confidence and pave the way for further reductions. We can do this by building a better system for national reporting on NPT implementation. The cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), has taken a fresh look at how this might be achieved. We encourage all to consider the NPDI transparency working paper and invite you to attend our side-event on 1 May.

If we are going to move safely toward a world without nuclear weapons – then taking effective risk reduction measures is essential. We welcome initial discussions in the UN Disarmament Commission and in the Conference on Disarmament. Australia is also pleased to support UNIDIR’s risk reduction project.

At last year’s Friends of the CTBT Meeting, which we co-chaired with Japan, further progress toward CTBT universalisation was welcomed. With Thailand’s ratification the entire ASEAN

membership is now party to the treaty. We would like to see this replicated in other regions.

A central plank of the progressive approach is that the prevailing international environment needs to be taken into account in advancing nuclear disarmament. As such, we consider the dialogue proposed by the US on ‘Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament’ a useful initiative that can be taken forward in parallel with other elements of the progressive approach.

Continuing practical efforts which support the NPT’s objectives is vital to facilitate sustainable disarmament outcomes for the future.

Thank you Chair.