



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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First Committee – General Debate

Thank you Chair. Congratulations on your election. You have my delegation's full support.

We are pleased that First Committee is returning to its pre-pandemic structure allowing for deeper exchange and action to help address the immense global challenges we are facing.

We meet at a time when international security is being undermined by states prepared to disregard well-established international rules and norms and pursue their aims by the exercise of power and aggression.

As Australia's Foreign Minister underlined in her address to the UN General Assembly last month, 'we cannot accept a situation where large countries determine the fate of smaller countries.'

That is why Russia's unilateral, illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine cannot be normalised and it cannot be minimised.

Russia's attack on Ukraine is an attack on all smaller countries.

Its missile strikes targeting civilians in Ukraine, including in Kyiv, and President Putin's continued threats of escalation are reprehensible.

We stand with Ukraine and our partners to condemn Russia's sham referenda, which are illegitimate and have no legal effect.

We stand with Ukraine and our partners in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We stand with Ukraine and our partners to once again call on Russia to immediately withdraw from Ukrainian territory.

Chair

We are in no doubt about the appalling consequences of nuclear warfare – for humanity, for the environment, for civilisation.

President Putin's nuclear threats underline the danger that nuclear weapons pose to us all, and the urgent need for progress on nuclear disarmament.

Australia has always pursued a world without nuclear weapons, and we will redouble our efforts towards this goal - and to strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

This will include deeper engagement across the issues considered by this committee.

The 10th NPT Review Conference demonstrated the commitment of all but one of its States Parties to advancing the objectives of the NPT.

The Treaty continues to deliver tangible security benefits for us all, and so we cannot be deterred by the bad-faith actions of one State.

We have the opportunity to strengthen the NPT further through the working group that will be established for this purpose. Australia was pleased that this contribution from the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative achieved the support of States Parties. We will be fully engaged in this important work.

Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are continuing to work closely with the IAEA on ensuring that the

highest possible safeguards are applied to Australia's naval nuclear propulsion program. Australia's commitment to meet fully all its obligations under the NPT and Treaty of Rarotonga is steadfast and unwavering.

Chair

As a country that has experienced the consequences of nuclear testing, consequences which were borne disproportionately by our First Nations peoples, we welcome the activities held this year to mark the 25th anniversary of the CTBT's adoption. Notably, we welcome the ratifications in our region by Timor Leste and Tuvalu. We remain determined to see the treaty enter into force and urge all states yet to do so to sign and ratify the treaty. We encourage states to co-sponsor this year's CTBT resolution.

Australia is proud to be advancing a First Nations foreign policy agenda. We will appoint an Ambassador for First Nations Peoples and establish an Office of First Nations Engagement that will actively include and advance the interests of Indigenous Australians in international affairs.

Australia also continues to champion the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of people of all genders in international security forums and organisations. This is not just a matter of equality but of effectiveness: diversity brings strength, creativity and energy. For the same reasons, we fully support the meaningful participation of young people in our field.

Chair

Australia condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s ongoing development of its illegal and destabilising nuclear and ballistic missile programs, including the unprecedented succession of destabilising launches it has conducted as recently as this past week.

We urge the DPRK not to resume nuclear testing, and to comply fully with the UN Security Council resolutions requiring it to abandon its nuclear, other weapons of mass

destruction and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Alongside others, we remain deeply concerned by Iran's failure to resolve outstanding NPT safeguards issues in a full and technically credible manner. We emphasise Australia's strong support for the professional work of the Director General and IAEA staff as they seek to implement NPT safeguards in Iran.

Chair

In this 25th anniversary year of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and 50th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), Australia calls on all states parties to recommit to ridding the world of these weapons and ensure they are never again used.

Australia looks forward to working together with BTWC States Parties to achieve meaningful outcomes at the Review Conference later this year. We must seize this opportunity to break the stalemate of the last two decades.

Conventional weapons contribute daily to human death and suffering in both civil and conflict settings, across all regions, and their challenges demand the international community's focused attention.

In an environment where enhanced global cooperation is urgently needed, Australia welcomes the consensus outcome reached by the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons this year.

The conclusion of negotiations on a political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas was another 'bright spot' in 2022. Australia looks forward to formally signing that declaration in Dublin next month. We further encourage all states to co-sponsor this year's resolution on 'countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.'

Australia fully supports and actively participates in multilateral export control regimes - including by

implementing States' obligations under non-proliferation treaties and Security Council Resolution 1540. This helps to ensure effective export controls on goods and technologies used in the manufacture of WMD do not get into the wrong hands.

Chair

We all bear a responsibility to work together to manage the complex international security challenges in cyberspace, and to focus our efforts on promoting peace and avoiding conflict in this sphere.

Australia remains firmly committed to meeting these challenges, and reaffirms our commitment to act in accordance with the cumulative and evolving Framework established through the consensus reports of prior Groups of Governmental Experts and the inaugural Open-Ended Working Group.

As a country with rapidly growing interests in space, Australia welcomes the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours. This important discussion is raising awareness of how a behaviours-based approach may help contribute to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We urge all countries to engage.

Chair

In taking up our important work in this committee, let us keep our shared objectives front of mind and work cooperatively beyond divisions. Thank you.