

## Tenth NPT Review Conference - Main Committee I Australia's Statement

Thank you Chair.

We congratulate you on your appointment and assure you of Australia's full support. The work of this Committee will be critical to the success of this Conference and we urge all delegations to work collectively and constructively under your leadership towards this end.

The deteriorating global security environment demands no less than our very best efforts. Geopolitical tensions remain high; some nuclear weapons states continue to expand their nuclear arsenals; and the global trend in the reduction of nuclear weapon stockpiles is at risk of reversing for the first time in many years. And we have this year witnessed unprecedented and irresponsible nuclear threats in the context of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Australia deeply regrets that Russia has failed to adhere to the security assurances it provided Ukraine in the Budapest Memorandum; assurances that were directly related to Ukraine's decision to join the NPT. Australia condemns Russia's nuclear brinkmanship, which highlights the threats these weapons pose to us all and the urgent need for progress on their elimination.

While the extension of New START was welcome, Russia's subsequent actions have put an unfortunate halt to much needed strategic stability talks between the United States and Russia. China's engagement will also be required in shaping the new era of arms control and strategic stability for which we all hope.

We welcomed the P5 statement in January, endorsing the Reagan-Gorbachev principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. But words must be followed by actions. We encourage the nuclear weapon states to take tangible actions to further reduce nuclear arsenals and advance progress toward nuclear disarmament.

Chair

Australia urges all NPT states to work towards realising the goal we all share - a world free from nuclear weapons. We need to focus on areas of convergence, where real progress can be made.

From Australia's perspective, we want to build support for practical and realistic measures on nuclear disarmament.

To this end, Australia has been working with Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) partners to develop a set of concrete recommendations across all three pillars. We invite all States Parties to consider and support our recommendations on Pillar 1.

Chair

Reflecting the importance of nuclear disarmament verification as an effective step towards implementation of Article VI, we encourage further conceptual and practical work to ensure the verification tools and processes are mature when needed. We look forward to hosting the plenary meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification in Sydney this December.

During the current NPT cycle, we have seen growing support for nuclear risk reduction measures and we see real scope for consensus outcomes in this area. Risk reduction initiatives are not a substitute for tangible progress on disarmament, but they can make a genuine contribution to our security and thereby assist in creating conditions conducive to progress on disarmament.

We welcome work done in this area, including by the Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) initiative and the Stockholm Initiative. We are also encouraged by the P5's recent recognition of the need to engage in multilateral and bilateral dialogue on risk reduction.

Transparency remains a core objective for Australia, as an important step towards disarmament. Australia will continue to advocate for higher reporting standards, particularly by nuclear weapons states and encourages nuclear weapon states who have not done so to make base-line declarations on nuclear warheads and arsenal sizes.

We continue to urge all states participating in the Conference on Disarmament to agree to commence negotiations for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) at the earliest opportunity. We cannot afford further delays.

As a country that has experienced the consequences of nuclear testing, we remain disappointed that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has yet to enter into force. We are determined to see it do so and renew our call on all remaining Annex II States to ratify without delay. We join Executive Secretary Rob Floyd in warmly congratulating those States that have joined the Treaty this year: Gambia, Dominica, and our neighbours Tuvalu and Timor-Leste.

Chair

The fact that we gather here in these challenging circumstances, demonstrates our commitment to strengthening this vital regime. To succeed, this Committee must put aside our differences and focus on the steps that we can realistically take now - steps that enable us to create an environment in which all countries see themselves as being more secure without nuclear weapons than with them. We urge all delegations to work cooperatively and pragmatically to this end.

Thank you.