

Safeguards – Australian Statement

Chair

First, Australia would like to endorse the statement by Germany, reflecting the joint work of the NPT. In particular we encourage consideration of the recommended text of safeguards in working paper 10.

We would also like to draw attention to recommendations 15 to 26 in the Vienna Group of Ten's working paper 3, rev. 1.

Chair

Australia concluded a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the IAEA in 1974. Australia was also the first country to sign and bring into force an Additional Protocol (AP) in 1997.

In the year 2000, Australia was the first state to obtain IAEA's 'Broader Conclusion'. And we have received the same conclusion each year since.

Australia, like many other states here, considers a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) together with an Additional Protocol (AP) as the contemporary standard for verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the absence of clandestine nuclear programs.

As such we hope that this Committee's report can recognise that a CSA together with an AP represents the current verification standard pursuant to article III (1) of the Treaty and urge all states parties that have not yet done so, to bring into force a CSA and additional protocol without further delay.

Australia supports the IAEA's state level concept as a measure to continuously enhance the effectiveness of safeguards.

Chair

It is this longstanding commitment to safeguards and non-proliferation which heightens our concerns about the current situation in Ukraine.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and ongoing occupation of Ukraine represents an acute non-proliferation risk. We are deeply concerned by IAEA reports that nuclear safeguards data transmission to IAEA headquarters from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant have been interrupted on two occasions.

Russia should immediately withdraw from the territory of Ukraine and return control of Ukraine's nuclear sites to Ukrainian authorities.

Australia fully supports the work of the IAEA and its Director General to assist Ukraine in the areas of nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

Chair

Regarding the implementation of safeguards to naval nuclear propulsion we reiterate that this is permitted under the NPT and, as the IAEA DG said in his statement to this Conference, was foreseen by the existing legal framework.

Australia's naval nuclear propulsion activities under the AUKUS partnership will occur within the framework of Australia's CSA and AP.

This ensures that Australia's non-proliferation framework will continue to be underpinned by the IAEA's highest safeguards standards.

Chair

Australia expresses full confidence in the technical authority of the IAEA as the sole competent authority for verifying States compliance with safeguards agreements.

We oppose the formation of a special committee or additional processes which call into question the Agency's long-established mandate to engage with Member States on safeguards issues.

We encourage the Committee to consider our working paper - number 66 - on this matter.