



AUSTRALIA



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TENTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

1 AUGUST 2022

National Statement

Statement by Senator the Hon Tim Ayres

Mr President

I offer my congratulations on your election as President of this Review Conference and assure you of Australia's full support.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a key success of the post-war multilateral project. It is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The Treaty continues to deliver tangible security benefits for all of us, and as such must be preserved and strengthened.

At the heart of the NPT was always the goal of a world without nuclear weapons – a goal to which Australia remains profoundly committed.

At this Conference and beyond, each of us must work to forestall the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that await us unless we take real steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr President

The challenges to the NPT have never been greater. As we undertake the important process of reviewing our progress in

implementing the Treaty since 2015, we need to acknowledge that the global security environment has further deteriorated.

And international security is being undermined by those who seek to resolve disputes by power and size instead of by international rules and norms.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and its nuclear brinkmanship is a stark example; Australia condemns this senseless aggression and calls on Russia to cease hostilities and withdraw immediately.

North Korea continues the development of its illegal and destabilising nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

We remain deeply concerned by Iran's failure to comply with its NPT safeguards agreement in a full and transparent manner. This situation cannot persist indefinitely.

For Australia, these serious challenges only reinforce the need for us to work constructively together, whatever our differences as sovereign nations, for a common purpose – making the world safe from nuclear weapons. The NPT provides vital architecture for us to come together as states, raise our concerns, put forward ideas and find ways to move forward.

At this Conference, Australia will continue a proud tradition of advocating for realistic and practical measures that take us closer towards our goals. We commit to work constructively with all States Parties to this end.

Mr President

Australia strongly supports the International Atomic Energy Agency's crucial role in supporting this Treaty. The international safeguards system is essential for global confidence in the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The benefits of the NPT reach far beyond security. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technologies, including in

human health, agriculture and the environment, have helped people around the world thrive. Australia continues to support the IAEA's excellent work in facilitating access to these peaceful benefits by all States.

Mr President

Last September, Australia, the US and the UK announced the beginning of a trilateral effort towards Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines, as is provided for in the NPT, the IAEA Statute, and our own Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

All three partners are committed to upholding our legal obligations and strengthening the integrity of the non-proliferation regime. Let me repeat, we will not simply uphold but strengthen the integrity of the regime.

Australia is proceeding transparently, engaging closely with the IAEA and providing updates to the international community as we move through the 18-month consultation period. Earlier today, Director General Grossi confirmed to this conference that this vital work on non-proliferation safeguards is well under way.

We acknowledge the interest of some States Parties in this development and encourage delegates to consider our working paper and to engage with our delegation should you have questions.

Mr President

In Australia and in the Pacific; and in other parts of the world, the impact of nuclear weapons testing has been borne disproportionately by First Nations lands and peoples.

Mr President

I thank Prime Minister Bainimarama for his statement on behalf of parties to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, all

members of the Pacific family of which Australia is proud to be a part.

The resolve to maintain a nuclear weapons-free and independent Pacific, and the dogged determination of the Pacific States shall be a clarion call to this Conference to rebuild momentum towards total disarmament.

Australia is pleased to see, and supports, the increasing attention on diversity in the advocacy and technical work around disarmament, including effort to increase the number of women engaged in this work. There should be more women at these conferences and in all the associated fora.

Ultimately, the elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way of securing a safe and peaceful world. Australia, and the Albanese Government, remains steadfastly committed to that objective; and to putting out shoulder behind the wheel, with all of you, to rebuild momentum towards this most noble of objectives.

Thank you.