Statement on the Progressive Approach UNGA 72
Delivered by H.E John Quinn, Australian Ambassador for Disarmament

Mr Chairperson
I take the floor on behalf of Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, The Netherlands, and Turkey

1. We are committed to our shared goal of attaining a world without nuclear weapons – pursued pragmatically and effectively through the “Progressive Approach”.

2. A key element of the “Progressive Approach” is that effective, sustainable disarmament must take into account the international security environment. The current situation with North Korea highlights this ground truth. North Korea’s illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a grave and increasing threat to regional as well as global security, and a serious challenge to the NPT.

3. Only by addressing both the security and humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons can we take the incremental but necessary steps that will enhance security for all and provide the best chance of reaching a world without nuclear weapons.

4. To advance the course of nuclear disarmament and strengthen nuclear non-proliferation, thereby enhancing international security, we are fully committed to supporting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT is the cornerstone of global peace and security and of the international community’s long-term non-proliferation and disarmament efforts – with its safeguards and verification arrangements.

5. Effective disarmament must be inclusive, and engage nuclear weapons states who have special responsibilities in
this field, in practical ways which build the trust necessary for further reductions. The only way to achieve complete elimination of nuclear weapons is through effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. This can only be achieved through the constructive engagement of all relevant parties.

6. Far from maintaining the status quo, our goal is to take practical and effective actions to advance disarmament. Many of these steps are outlined in the NPT 2010 Action Plan – the comprehensive blueprint for implementation across the three NPT pillars.

7. The NPT provides the foundation for States to work together on key building blocks to achieve common objectives. It contains hard-won treaty-level commitments on the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons, as provided in Article VI. The reflections by the Chair of the 2017 Preparatory Committee on the basic views that States Parties appear to share on the NPT, could serve as a reference point for further discussions in the 2020 Review Cycle.

8. Progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament requires practical and effective confidence-building measures. Trust must be built through credible engagement and demonstrated implementation of concrete disarmament measures by nuclear weapons states, as well as commitment to non-proliferation by all States, and support for the IAEA’s safeguards system which ensures confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

9. We are making progress. Renewed momentum has been given over the last year to a number of parallel and simultaneous measures or ‘building blocks’ which are necessary to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are encouraged by practical progress through the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, and look forward to the commencement of the work of the GGE on Nuclear Disarmament Verification – both initiatives of UNGA71. We need to prioritise practical progress on these and many other items in the 2010 Action Plan, including increasing transparency measures, and
achieving the early entry into force of the CTBT. In the meantime, we have to complete and finalize its monitoring system.

10. The 50th anniversary of the NPT in 2020 provides the opportunity for us to be forward-looking and focus on common interests in supporting and strengthening the NPT. We all need to do our part in minimising divisions, and find the space for compromise and common ground to advance our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.