Chair

Congratulations on your election as Chair. Please be assured of my delegation’s strong support for your work, including through our role as Vice-Chair.

The issues considered by this Committee are of acute complexity and reflect the challenge of today’s international security environment. We all need to support and protect the international rules that underpin stability and prosperity and enable cooperation to tackle these global challenges.

Chair

Australia strongly encourages States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to continue to respond promptly and effectively to those who challenge the Convention and its implementation.

States Parties have demonstrated their resolve to hold accountable those who use chemical weapons, by ensuring that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) can take on an
attribution capability, including with a global reach. Australia welcomes that the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team is now operational.

We encourage all Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to focus on ideas likely to attract consensus ahead of the next Review Conference in 2021.

Chair

Australia remains committed to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We will invest our energies in practical endeavours that take account of global security realities and stand the best chance of delivering.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has delivered and continues to do so. The 2020 Review Conference, marking the Treaty's first half-century in force, is the time for States Parties to come together and build on our common interests in strengthening the NPT – as these greatly outweigh our differences.

With our cross-regional partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, Australia will spare no effort in seeking outcomes at the RevCon that support the NPT’s bold vision.

Australia welcomes the forward momentum in the “progressive approach” to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The consensus reports of the Experts Groups on nuclear disarmament verification, and a fissile material treaty pave the way for next steps. The further universalisation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) sends a strong message that nuclear testing is intolerable. We encourage states to sponsor this year’s CTBT resolution.

Nuclear risk reduction has received deserved attention as views converge on the importance of immediate measures that can be taken pending the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Chair
Australia joins other nations in seeking permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, including the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the DPRK. We condemn the DPRK’s repeated missile launches. Such provocations do nothing for peace and stability and are a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions. We call on the DPRK to choose the path of dialogue and we commend the commitment demonstrated by the United States and the Republic of Korea, in particular, to continue talks with the DPRK.

Turning to Iran, Australia remains supportive of the JCPOA, but is deeply concerned by Iran’s decision to reduce its compliance with the arrangement. While we look to JCPOA participants to address this issue, we continue to urge Iran to return to full compliance.

Chair

Australia continues to support the implementation and universalisation of the Arms Trade Treaty, particularly in our region. We welcomed in particular, the Decision on Gender and Gender-Based Violence agreed at this year’s Conference of States Parties, especially given its strong link to the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

We encourage all states that are not yet party to the Treaty to look at it afresh, noting it does not impinge on a state’s right to regulate and control conventional arms within its territory.

New or emerging technologies with implications for global security present contemporary challenges in relation to regulating their development and use. That is why Australia values the CCW as the most appropriate forum to address these questions, in particular to elaborate additional guiding principles on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Chair

Australia works with its international partners to uphold the rules-based order online, just as we do offline. The international community has agreed by consensus that existing international law and agreed norms apply to state behaviour in cyberspace. Yet a number of actors continue to use cyberspace as a platform to undermine global peace and stability.
Australia welcomes the opportunity to advance discussions on these critical issues through the establishment of the Open Ended Working Group and concurrent sixth Group of Governmental Experts.

Australia remains committed to the preservation of the space domain as a secure, safe and sustainable environment for the benefit of all. To meet this, we will continue to support balanced and practical measures to strengthen norms of responsible behaviour, and the international rules and laws for space.

Chair

In these challenging times, Australia underlines the need for the UN disarmament machinery to operate at its full potential. Accordingly, we champion full and effective participation by both women and men in international security forums.

During our 2020 Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament we will pursue active coordination to ensure productive outcomes and purposeful continuity between Presidents. As chair of the UN Disarmament Commission, we regretted the blocking of a substantive session this year. This must not be repeated.

Chair

Across these fields, Australia remains committed to playing its part by working constructively and collaboratively towards our shared goal of enhancing global security and stability through this committee’s important work.

Thank you.