Chair

Australia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, and with the statement on behalf of a group of countries on the NPT.

At the recent CTBT Article XIV Conference in New York, Australia’s Foreign Minister, Senator Marise Payne said: “In what we all know is a challenging international security environment, the international community needs to turn towards practical efforts to build confidence and reduce tensions.”

What do we mean by that? How does each UN member State answer the question of the practicability of their contribution to reducing tensions and building confidence? This is a collective endeavour.

Perception is powerful – each country makes different assessments of the international security environment based on a range of factors – their relationships, geography, and interests.
We have different views on how to make the world safer for our communities, on how to get rid of nuclear weapons in a way that makes us more secure.

We need to more substantively engage in the difficult conversations about what a world without nuclear weapons looks like; how to achieve it, and more importantly how to maintain it.

Australia is committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons – as a global endeavour leading to a safer, more secure world.

Mr Chair

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the global pact which unites us.

It is an enormously successful, and critical part of the global security architecture.

In 2020 we are proud to commemorate 50 years of the NPT – what a truly remarkable achievement – the result of constant care and attention through a rigorous review process and commitment to implement the Treaty.

Next year, we will collectively review the operation and implementation of the NPT, and look ahead to how we can strengthen it.

As you would expect in a global instrument with near universal membership, we have different views on what success looks like in 2020.

As a community, we do ourselves a disservice if we take a reductionist approach.

If it is possible to agree one composite outcome document, then we should put the work in now to achieve that. But consensus means bringing all NPT States Parties along with
us. We need to unite on what we can agree, and keep working on narrowing differences.

We must aim for outcomes which strengthen NPT implementation, and provide clear steps on what needs to be done. It may be possible to be more ambitious if we don't constrain ourselves unduly on the final shape of any outcomes.

Mr Chair

We urge all NPT States Parties to approach the 2020 NPT Review Conference with a growth mind-set. It is too easy to blame others for not being as far along the path of nuclear disarmament as we would want.

If each NPT State Party comes to the RevCon with a positive agenda, and brings something to the table that they can contribute, working collaboratively with others, then we have a real shot at success – however it is defined.

Mr Chair

Australia will play its part. Fortuitously, Australia will preside over the Conference on Disarmament in the lead-up to the NPT RevCon.

We hope to use this time to focus on issues critical for nuclear disarmament – verification, risk reduction, diversity and inclusion.

Mr Chair

Australia invests energy in practical endeavours that take account of global security realities and stand the best chance of delivering.

This includes working together to enhance transparency and confidence-building; verification; reduce the risk of inadvertent nuclear weapons use; commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Treaty; and take steps that bring us closer to entry
into force of the CTBT. We urge states to sponsor this year’s CTBT resolution.

We are encouraged by new thinking to move the conversation forward in creative, innovative ways – including through Sweden’s Stepping Stones approach, and the working groups under the “Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament” initiative.

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

Our common interests in strengthening the NPT greatly outweigh our differences.

Thank you