Panel III - 4 May
Statement by Australia - delivered by Darren Hansen, First Secretary, Australian Mission to the United Nations

Like others, would like to thank the panelists who provided presentations in the morning session for their thoughts on this important issue. Particularly the presentation by Ms Thurlow on her experience as a Hibakusha.

No one disputes the importance attached to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The debate has renewed focus on nuclear disarmament and should be a unifying element. Australia has participated in humanitarian consequences conferences and has spoken of the need for humanitarian consequences to be part of the nuclear disarmament debate.

The progressive approach in its opening sentence observes that the international community shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. The view of the progressive approach is that only by addressing both the security as well as 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.

We believe the progressive approach is consistent with the Humanitarian consequences approach. It offers a practical way forward which looks to engage with the countries that actually possess nuclear weapons. Our approach is not designed to maintain the status quo but to bring about effective change through an inclusive process to reach global zero.

The Progressive Approach paper calls for confidence measures that can assist create the conditions that would further facilitate major reductions in nuclear arsenals, including efforts to reduce levels of hostility and tension between States - particularly between those possessing nuclear weapons.

It lists within its measures the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education, including on humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, especially in states that possess nuclear weapons. The Netherlands and Japan earlier raised some key points which need to be further considered particularly in the OEWG outcomes document.

As we have said before, the hard yards need to be taken and there are no quick fixes. This does not mean we want the status quo and it most certainly does not mean we want to ignore the terrible humanitarian consequence of nuclear weapons. It is a considered position which sees the best means to respect the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons as through an approach which calls on all member states to get on with job with implementing the required practical measures addressed in the progressive approach paper.