Cluster II Statement

for delivery by
H.E. Peter Shannon
Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the International Organisations in Vienna.

Mr Chairman

Australia has distributed a working paper on Cluster Two issues. In view of time constraints I will highlight some of the main points.

NPT safeguards applied by the IAEA provide the practical means for states to demonstrate the peaceful nature of nuclear activities.

The assurance so provided is a fundamental element of collective security, and an essential foundation for trade and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Non-proliferation assurances are also crucial to the environment of confidence necessary for continuing progress on nuclear disarmament.

All NPT parties have an interest in strong support for the IAEA safeguards system, and in ensuring its continued effectiveness.

The non-proliferation regime is confronted with unprecedented challenges which need to be met firmly by upholding the Treaty’s integrity and reinforcing the
authority of IAEA safeguards.

Any State that wilfully violates safeguards obligations, by its own actions isolates itself from the benefits which accrue from NPT adherence.

The IAEA Board of Governors has found that Iran’s many failures and breaches of its obligations constitute non-compliance, and reported Iran to the UN Security Council.

Australia shares concern about Iran’s continuing uranium enrichment activities in defiance of the IAEA Board and the Security Council, and Iran’s rejection of the proposals of China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the support of the EU High Representative.

Resolving all outstanding issues, as well as full implementation of Iran’s Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol, are essential before the IAEA can conclude that Iran is in compliance.

Iran must cooperate fully and promptly with the IAEA.

North Korea’s nuclear weapons programs remain a serious challenge. The IAEA Board of Governors has twice found North Korea to be non-compliance with its NPT safeguards obligations and reported this non-compliance to the UN Security Council.

Australia strongly supported adoption by the Security Council of Resolutions 1695 and 1718.

We have made our concerns clear elsewhere, but wish to note here that such compliance challenges, and revelations of previously undeclared nuclear programs, leave no further doubt that comprehensive IAEA safeguards are insufficient to prevent proliferant states from covertly acquiring sensitive nuclear materials and technology.

Australia was the first country to conclude a safeguards-strengthening Additional
Protocol with the IAEA in 1997.

The Additional Protocol serves all states' interests by enhancing the IAEA's ability to provide assurances as to the peaceful nature of nuclear activities – in turn supporting cooperation on peaceful uses, further progress on nuclear disarmament, and global security in general.

Australia is working with the IAEA and other countries to increase the number of Additional Protocols in force.

We note that of the 64 non-nuclear-weapon states with significant nuclear activities, 45 have additional protocols in place and a further 12 have signed or been approved.

States with significant nuclear activities still outside the strengthened safeguards system are out of step.

We again urge states yet to sign or ratify an Additional Protocol to do so promptly.

A comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an Additional Protocol now represents the verification standard required under Article III.1 of the NPT.

NPT parties should declare this standard unequivocally.

The IAEA Board of Governors has concluded that the previous Small Quantities Protocol (SQP) constituted a weakness, and decided to modify the standard SQP text and change the eligibility.

All SQP states that have not already done so should adopt the revised SQP. And SQP States that are planning to acquire nuclear facilities or to otherwise exceed the criteria should renounce their SQPs and resume full application of Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement provisions.

All States with SQPs should bring into force an Additional Protocol.
In order to draw well-founded safeguards conclusions, the IAEA needs to receive early design information in accordance with the IAEA Board of Governors’ 1992 interpretation.

Australia urges all non-nuclear-weapon states to provide this information to the IAEA on a timely basis.

All States must cooperate fully with the IAEA in implementing safeguards agreements and in expeditiously addressing anomalies, inconsistencies and questions identified by the IAEA.

Australia has the honour to convene in Vienna a group known as the G-10.

The participants – Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden – are like-minded on the NPT’s vital security and other benefits, and on the value of constructive progress in the implementation of Articles III and IV in particular.

The Group has lodged working papers on Cluster II and Cluster III issues, and the CTBT.