

**IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE**  
**44th REGULAR SESSION 18-22 SEPTEMBER 2000**

Mr. President

The Australian delegation is pleased to join others in congratulating you on your election as Conference President. We congratulate too, the Director General for his leadership over the past twelve months.

We would also like to welcome Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and the Central African Republic as members of the Agency.

Australia's commitment to the IAEA is strong, and we take our responsibilities as a Member of the Board of Governors seriously. The Agency plays a central role in the contribution of nuclear technology to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. The Agency also plays a vital role in maintaining global nuclear non-proliferation and security through the operation of the nuclear safeguards system.

It is these roles which make the JAEA one of the central pillars of the nuclear non-proliferation regime of which the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone.

(Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference Outcomes)

At last year's General Conference, we voiced our expectations that the NPT Review Conference would be a landmark event in the non-proliferation, nuclear arms control, and disarmament calendar. And indeed it was. Australia's commitment to the NPT is reflected in our view that the momentum of the Review Conference should be sustained through the Agency's endorsement, and vigorous pursuit of, those outcomes relevant to the work of the IAEA. This is particularly so, given that the JAEA is the principal agent for technical cooperation, technology transfer, the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and the establishment and administration of safeguards and their application. The NPT Review Conference's outcomes, as reflected in the Final Document, reflect a strong endorsement of the Agency in this regard.

The two components that underpin the long-term assurance and stability of international trade in nuclear materials and technology for peaceful purposes, and which foster an environment of confidence and safety in which all forms of cooperation for peaceful purposes take place, are the international safeguards system and the complementary nuclear export control regime. These components are embodied in Articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT.

(CTBT, FMCT)

Other instruments for international arms control, and ultimately, nuclear disarmament, are the CTBT and the FMCT. We are pleased to see progress towards implementation of CTBT verification, and we welcome the recent certification of the first International Monitoring Stations as meeting treaty standards. Australia is working hard to promote early entry into force of the Treaty and we consider that there is a need to avoid a loss of momentum in the present circumstances. We have been lobbying countries in the Asia-Pacific region on Treaty accession, as well as members of the Group of 44 designated countries whose ratification is required for entry into force, but which have yet to accede to the treaty. We very much regret that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to agree on a Work Program, which would enable commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.

(Iraq)

Mr. President there is a continuing need to remain vigilant in looking for clandestine nuclear weapons programs and in maintaining pressure on States, which the IAEA deems, are not in full compliance with their obligations. Australia adds its voice to those who have expressed concern that, for some considerable time now, the Agency has been unable to carry out its inspection activity in Iraq in accordance with its mandate under Security Council Resolution 687. We are concerned that Iraq might take advantage of the cessation of SCR 687-related inspections to reactivate its nuclear weapons program. We welcome the IAEA's commitment to resume verification in Iraq as soon as circumstances allow.

(DPRK)

With respect to the DPRK, the Agency's responsibility is two-fold: that flowing from the IAEA's safeguards agreement with North Korea, and secondly, the role pursuant to the Agreed Framework concluded between the DPRK and the United States.

Australia welcomed the Agreed Framework, as it has welcomed, and supported politically and financially, progress achieved through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). Australia has been an early, strong and consistent supporter of KEDO and has contributed AUD 15.9 million to KEDO for the purchase of heavy fuel oil to help meet the DPRK's energy needs until the light water reactors come on stream. We were also pleased to announce Australia's normalisation of relations with the DPRK in May this year, and have welcomed the historic Korean leaders summit and DPRK's engagement with others in the region, particularly the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Mr. President, I am sure we all were delighted to see the Koreans marching together as a single team at the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics to the spontaneous applause of 110,000 people. This was another major step in the development of a new era on the Korean Peninsula, which we hope will quickly lead to a resumption of DPRK co-operation with the IAEA.

The IAEA has done well to monitor, under difficult circumstances, the freeze required by the Agreed Framework of nuclear activities in the DPRK. On the other hand, for the IAEA to discharge the full responsibilities assigned to it under the NPT and the Framework, there will need to be full cooperation from the DPRK authorities.

Australia remains concerned at the DPRK's continuing non-compliance with its safeguards agreement. We register again our expectation that the DPRK will preserve all the information needed by the JABA to verify its initial inventory.

#### (Safeguards)

Australia has long regarded the strengthening of the safeguards system as a priority objective for non-proliferation. Australia has a longstanding record as a strong supporter of IAEA safeguards, through our position on the Board of Governors, our Safeguards Support Program and through our participation in the Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation.

We were the first State to sign an Additional Protocol in 1997, and the first State to have it enter into force. Australia is an active participant in the IAEA's ongoing work on integrated safeguards which, though the merger of classical safeguards and safeguards-strengthening measures, will ultimately enhance both the efficiency and effectiveness of safeguards. Indeed, Australia has now agreed with the Agency an arrangement for the application of integrated safeguards in our country. We were very pleased that the Agency's Safeguards Implementation Report for 1999 concluded, in a whole-of-state analysis, that Australia was one of two States in which there was an absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

Australia strongly supports action to promote universal adherence to the Additional Protocols, and would like to see this Conference promote such action.

#### (Budget)

I would like to turn now to the issue of the Agency's budget. Pressure on resources is an issue common to all organisations, and no less a vexed question for the Agency, as it attempts to balance and prioritise its activities across the three pillars.

We are pleased that new financing mechanisms for the two very important activities of safeguards and technical cooperation have been endorsed by the Board of Governors and we look forward to their adoption by this Conference. Apart from the crucial safeguards and nuclear safety activities of the Agency, its significant global and regional impact in the field of nuclear science, technology and applications should not be under-stated.

The inevitable budgetary pressures make it all the more important that all Member States pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. The Agency's recent difficulties are another timely reminder of the need for all Member States to meet their financial obligations.

#### (Technical Cooperation)

Australia considers that the IAEA's Technical Cooperation program, which plays a crucial role in international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, is an important part of nuclear non-proliferation. It has enabled a great many countries to have access to, and derive the benefits of, nuclear technology in a wide range of areas, from agriculture and human health to industry and resource management. We pay our very substantial contribution to the Fund on time each year and we contribute significantly on our own account to technology transfer and technical cooperation.

## (Nuclear Safety)

Mr. President, Australia is a staunch supporter of the international legal framework which underpins the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A key factor in the successful development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is the commitment and adherence to internationally accepted standards of nuclear safety by all States, and the development of a strong nuclear safety culture.

In Australia's immediate region, countries are concerned about the potential for harm arising from the maritime transport of nuclear materials through their region. While we can point to the shipment of nuclear material around the world without incident over the last 30 years, and the minimal risk of actual damage in the unlikely event of any accident, coastal states rightly expect that shipping states will observe strict standards in relation to safe transport and assure compensation for damage in the event of an accident.

Australia recognises the need to improve the international liability framework through fostering a global liability regime. And as a member of the South Pacific region, Australia has encouraged, and participated in, discussions with States involved in the shipment of nuclear material through the region to explore ways to address particular concerns.

## (Conclusion)

Mr. President

Dr Elbaradei's statement set out the highlights of another full year of activity by the IAEA in pushing forward with its mandate to harness the atom for the benefit of humanity. We strongly support the Agency in its efforts, and will continue to provide the technical, financial and political support for that effort to continue.