

**STATEMENT**

**by**

**AUSTRALIA**

**at the 46<sup>th</sup> General Conference  
of the International Atomic Energy Agency  
Vienna, 16 September 2002**

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Mr. President,

The Australian delegation joins others in congratulating you on your election as Conference President and looks forward to participating under your guidance.

Mr. President,

We would also like to express our appreciation for the Director-General's leadership in this challenging year for the Agency.

The alarming and tragic events of 11 September last year, and developments since then, highlighted the volatility and fragility of the world in which we live. We are increasingly residents of one 'global village'. The importance of promoting and protecting international frameworks, which ensure peace and security for all of us, has been thrown into sharper relief over the past year.

It has been my honour as Australia's representative to Chair the Board of Governors during this time. The Agency's pivotal role in ensuring the safe and peaceful development of nuclear science and energy has been underlined by heightened concern about the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, together with the spectre of nuclear or radiological terrorism. Australia commends the Agency for the substantive progress it has made in tackling these issues. We welcome the growing support from Members for the Agency's programs, including the important announcements we have heard at this meeting.

Mr. President,

Australia is strongly committed to the three pillars - nuclear safety, verification and technology - which form the basis of the Agency's mandate. We strongly support the Director General's effort to integrate the different arms of the Agency's activities and present a generally more unified face to the international community.

Australia believes that the global implementation of an effective system of strengthened safeguards delivers universal security benefits. The long term viability of nuclear science and energy is linked inextricably to the ability of the Agency to offer to the international community *credible* assurances that it is preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Without such assurances, the nuclear industry will be damaged irreparably, and the role of the Agency in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology will suffer accordingly.

In Australia's view, the Agency's verification and promotional activities are mutually reinforcing in nature. Strengthening the credibility of the Agency's verification system promotes confidence in nuclear science and technology, while widening the applications of nuclear science and technology to address environmental, health and other developmental issues, promotes acceptance of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. For Australia, the concept of 'balance' applied between verification and promotion does not adequately describe the relationship, implying as it does instead of mutual dependency, a degree of tension and exclusivity.

A priority for Australia and many others is achieving wide application of the IAEA's Additional Protocol on strengthened safeguards. As was clear from the Agency's presentation at the NPT PrepCom, IAEA safeguards are not static, and have undergone considerable evolution over the years. The strengthened safeguards system, including the conclusion of Additional Protocols, is the latest stage of this evolution.

Australia and many other delegations at the PrepCom made the point that the Additional Protocol represents the new verification standard for NPT safeguards. This means that the IAEA safeguards system, which all non-nuclear weapon state NPT parties are obliged by Article III.I of the Treaty to accept, should come quickly to be regarded as comprising both classical safeguards (INFCIRC/153) and the Additional Protocol (INFCIRC/540).

As other Delegations would be aware, Australia was the first Member State to ratify an Additional Protocol, and is pleased to be the first country in which integrated safeguards are being applied. The Agency is gaining practical experience in Australia in implementing new measures, such as unannounced inspections, complementary access and managed access, which will prove invaluable as integrated safeguards are extended to other countries. Importantly, we hope that Australia's experience will also demonstrate to others that integrated safeguards are not burdensome, but rather deliver benefits in terms of increased efficiency as well as effectiveness.

Australia takes this opportunity to urge states yet to sign and ratify an Additional Protocol to do so as soon as possible. While there has been an encouraging increase in the number of states concluding Additional Protocols over the last year or so, we still have a long way to go. Australia welcomes and supports, therefore, the global conference on Additional Protocols being hosted by Japan in December this year. Australia will be participating in this Conference and urges other member states to be active participants as well.

Mr. President,

Australia again expresses its disappointment that no tangible progress has been made in relation to the implementation of the safeguards agreement with the DPRK. As a party to the NPT, the DPRK has an unconditional obligation to comply with its NPT safeguards agreement with the Agency. Ongoing delays in verification work may delay delivery of key nuclear components for the KEDO light-water project likely to be needed in 2005. Australia urges the DPRK, therefore, to move quickly to cooperate fully with the Agency and Australia is cooperating with the DPRK authorities to assist this process.

Australia welcomes the Agency's efforts pertaining to Iraq, and expresses its deep concern over Iraq's continued non-compliance with UNSC resolutions requiring it to provide the Agency with the access and cooperation necessary to implement its Security Council mandate in Iraq. We also regret that the second and third round of talks between the UN and Iraq have not led to a resumption of inspections. Australia looks to Iraq to cooperate fully with IAEA and UNMOVIC inspectors in achieving the complete implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, and by so doing, to demonstrate that it has permanently abandoned any intention of developing nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

Australia believes that the Agency, as the principal focus for international cooperation on nuclear issues, has a central role to play in nuclear security and particularly in responding to the threats of nuclear terrorism. Australia sees this as a natural extension of the work the Agency is already doing in relation to nuclear safeguards, and the security and physical protection of nuclear material and facilities.

We commend the Agency on its progress in responding quickly and substantively to the threat of nuclear terrorism including through projects funded by the newly created Nuclear Security Fund. As a contributor to this Fund, Australia urges those member states that have not already done so to contribute to the Fund, financially and through in-kind measures.

We are conscious of the views held by many member states that new nuclear security projects should not be given priority over traditional areas of technical cooperation activity. But Australia considers that the security of nuclear and radioactive materials must be a priority for all countries, given their widespread use in industry, agriculture and medicine. The use of nuclear or other radioactive materials by terrorists in one country or other security shortcomings would inevitably lead to restrictions on their use in other countries, leading to damage to national nuclear technology programs and the welfare of those who benefit from such programs. The additional technical assistance stemming from projects under the Nuclear Security Fund will be a net gain to all members.

Australia also welcomes the substantive progress being made in strengthening the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, most recently at the technical meeting chaired by Australia in August. There is an obvious need to further improve the control of high activity sources, as a means of enhancing protection against the risk of radiological terrorism. Australia supports the meeting's recommendation that, once the current revision of the Agency's categorization of radiation sources is finalised, the Director General should convene a group of technical and legal experts to consider the revision of the scope of the Code.

Australia wishes to register its regret at the lack of significant progress in amending the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. The failure to

reach a consensus text at the meeting of the Legal and Technical Experts Group earlier this month was particularly disappointing. We call on all delegations participating in this process to work constructively to achieve a consensus on outstanding issues.

Mr. President,

The Agency has an essential role in establishing a global nuclear safety culture, including through the development of international safety standards. Australia has contributed to regional and international efforts to enhance the understanding of how safety culture can be implemented in nuclear organisations.

Australia welcomes the outcomes of the Second Review Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety held in April this year. While Australia does not have a nuclear power program, as a party to the Convention and an operator of a multi-purpose research reactor, we benefit from the review process. Australia urges other member states in similar position to ratify the Convention.

Australia also welcomes the increased focus on the safety of research reactors. As chair of the experts' group developing a code of conduct on the safety of nuclear research reactors, Australia is pleased to be playing a key role in strengthening the safety regime for research reactors.

Australia also continues to promote constructive dialogue on the safe transport of radioactive material. The transfer of nuclear technology and the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy depend very much on the global transportation of nuclear and other radioactive materials. Nuclear shipments have an excellent safety record, underpinned by effective Agency regulations in which Australia has every confidence.

Australia welcomes the increased dialogue between shipping and coastal states. We welcome, in particular, the increased transparency shown more recently by the shipping states, as illustrated in the positive findings of the Transport Safety Advisory Service mission to the United Kingdom.

I have been asked by the Director-General to Chair the Conference on the Safe Transport of Nuclear Material to be held in Vienna in July next year. Australia is honoured to accept this responsibility and calls on all parties involved to work

constructively to ensure that a consensus outcome can again be achieved by the Conference. We are optimistic that substantive progress can be made on this issue at this General Conference and over the coming months.

Mr. President,

Australia notes the growing span of nuclear science and technology applications which are assisting the social and economic development of many countries as outlined in the statement by the Director General. As a component of this, the Australian Nuclear Science & Technology Organisation has been pleased to continue its participation in the Agency's coordinated research projects. Increasingly important factors in strengthening the positive role of nuclear science and technology include the issues of maintaining nuclear knowledge and ongoing efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the Technical Cooperation Programme. Australia fully supports the Agency's initiatives in these areas.

Mr. President,

It is gratifying to see the very strong level of support for technical cooperation across the Agency's membership. This is evidenced by the impressive real increases to the Technical Cooperation Fund over recent years. Indeed, the rates of attainment achieved now are significantly higher than in years gone by. Australia is pleased to have been able to increase to A\$1.995 million its voluntary contribution to the TCF for 2003, which is well above the 2003 rate of attainment of 90 per cent. While Australia remains committed to the principle of voluntary contributions, we stress the importance of other states meeting the 90 per cent rate of attainment, or as a minimum, increasing current levels of funding to the TCF.

Australia has been pleased to contribute to the IAEA's technical cooperation activities through the provision of experts to undertake a range of missions and lecturing assignments over the past year - each aimed at fostering the development of knowledge and know-how in a cooperative manner. We are also contributing significantly to activities funded through our extra-budgetary project entitled "The Application of Radioisotope Technology to Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific". Australia has also continued to provide strong support to the Agency's Regional Cooperative Agreement for the Asia-Pacific (RCA) and in particular to the ongoing

progressive moves to introduce increased management and “ownership” of the programme by member states. Two of these innovations have been the introduction of the Lead Country Concept and Regional Resource Units. Both of these innovations also contribute to the increased sustainability of transferred technology, on both a national and a regional scale.

Mr. President,

Preventing threats to peace requires the building of confidence between nations, and the development of an effective international security system.

The Agency’s role in promoting sustainable development through the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy in such a way that *all* nations benefit has never been more important. At this critical point in history, member states must maintain the momentum for the Agency’s work on strengthened safeguards and other verification activity. This will help ensure a safer world for all of us.

In conclusion, Mr President, I can assure you that Australia will continue to strongly support the Agency as it implements its programs and adapts to meet new challenges. We look forward to working with the Director-General and the Board of Governors to meet the new challenges that lie ahead after this Conference.