

**Statement by the Head of the Australian delegation, Ambassador David Stuart, Governor and Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency, to the 58<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference**

**September 2014**

Mr President

My delegation congratulates you on your election. We have confidence that, under your leadership, the Conference will be given every opportunity to reach successful outcomes on all its agenda items. I am honoured to have been elected as Chair of the Committee of the Whole and will do what I can to deliver the resolutions to the Plenary on time and help make this Conference run smoothly. We welcome new members to the General Conference, including Brunei from our region, and support the applications of Vanuatu, Comoros, Djibouti and the Republic of Guyana.

Mr President

Australia continues to put great stock in the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme. It is a critical tool in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. These projects address many basic needs – safety and security, health and nutrition, food and agriculture, environmental protection – and play an important role in economic and social development.

In support of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund, Australia is pleased to announce its pledge to pay its share of the 2015 target, amounting to 1,393,147 EUR, in full and on time.

I am also pleased to advise that Australia has recently ratified the amendment to Article XIV.A of the IAEA statute, to enable the Agency to formally introduce biennial budgeting.

Mr President

Confidence in safeguards implementation provides the necessary assurance about the peaceful nature of nuclear activities and is the basic foundation for nuclear trade and cooperation, security and continuing progress on nuclear disarmament.

To be most effective, safeguards implementation must have **universal coverage**. We continue to call upon all NPT states which have yet to fulfil their obligations to conclude Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements to do so without delay. Safeguards implementation also needs **credible verification** – to provide confidence that the Agency can detect both misuse of declared facilities and the existence of undeclared facilities or activities.

We commend States that have brought the Additional Protocol into force since the last General Conference - namely India, Antigua and Barbuda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, bringing the number of States with an Additional Protocol in force to 124. We welcome this progress and strongly encourage those states yet to sign, ratify and implement an Additional Protocol to do so as soon as possible.

We commend the Director General for the Agency's efforts to engage Member States over the last 12 months in discussion of the state level concept for safeguards implementation. While this transparency and responsiveness to Member States' questions is welcome, it is also important that we all respect and promote the Agency's independence in monitoring safeguards globally and support adequate resourcing to meet the growing verification challenge.

Australia continues to work with the Agency to encourage all countries to **develop and implement effective safeguards**. We have used our role as chair of the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network to promote best practice in safeguards implementation as well as the overall non-proliferation regime in the Asia-Pacific region. We commend the Myanmar Ministry of Science & Technology for organising and hosting the very successful 2014 annual meeting of Asian-Pacific Safeguards Network in September. The Australian Safeguards Support Programme, which has been in place since 1980, continues to make valuable contributions to areas such as analytical services for environmental sampling and safeguards guides.

Mr President

A few states remain in breach of their safeguards obligations.

Australia has welcomed, and actively supported, the Agency's Framework for Cooperation with Iran and the P5+1/Iran Joint Plan of Action. We acknowledge the steps taken by all sides to implement the Joint Plan of Action and the ongoing negotiations which aim for a comprehensive, enduring solution. We still hope for a positive outcome. However, it is of concern that Iran has made little progress towards clarifying the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program (PMD). As an NPT state, Iran has an obligation to prove to the rest of the world that it is developing its nuclear program for purely peaceful purposes.

**North Korea** continues to be in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations and to act in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions, including by its continuing threats to undertake a "new form of nuclear test" and its efforts to develop its nuclear facilities, including by building a light water reactor at Yongbyon and its reported expansion of a centrifuge enrichment facility. Australia remains deeply concerned by North Korea's continuing attempts to develop, produce, modernise and proliferate weapons of mass destruction. We continue to urge North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We oppose its claims to a "right" to conduct further nuclear tests. North Korea should comply with its NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations and restart full cooperation with the IAEA. We support the

Agency in continuing to maintain its readiness to play an essential role in verifying the DPRK's nuclear program.

We have long supported the establishment of a **Middle East** zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Full compliance with their non-proliferation obligations by all states in the Middle East is critical to building mutual confidence and security in the region. We encourage all states to work constructively towards this goal.

Mr President

The Nuclear Security Summit held at The Hague in March 2014 reaffirmed at the highest levels participating countries' ongoing commitment to securing their nuclear facilities and material effectively. In support of the Agency's nuclear security programme, Australia this year contributed AUD 1 million to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund. While applying the highest levels of nuclear security, Australia is also looking to continuously improve its practices, notably by hosting our first IAEA International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission in November last year. This has already led to improvements in our nuclear security arrangements.

Mr President

Australia acknowledges the Agency's continuing efforts in implementing the Action Plan on **Nuclear Safety**. Since the Agency's Action Plan was developed after the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power station accident, there has been encouraging progress in a number of areas that give us more confidence in nuclear safety, including the conduct of stress tests on nuclear power plants and peer review processes. As a result we can be more confident now in emergency response preparedness for such a contingency.

The IAEA has also worked with the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) in supporting the publication of UNSCEAR's study of the health and environmental effects of the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident, which is the first authoritative account of the radiological consequences of the accident. We applaud the committee's initiative in engaging the public and the media, as such frank discussion is vital to maintain trust in the nuclear industry.

Australia is committed to the safe and environmentally sound mining, processing and transport of uranium. As such, we continue to engage other prospective uranium mining countries on responsible mining, and will hold a uranium side-event during the General Conference at 4 pm on Wednesday, 24 September.

Mr President

In 2012, I advised this Conference of Australia's plans to construct and commission a large-scale molybdenum-99 processing plant. I am pleased to report that the first licence was approved by our independent national regulator in June and construction is under way. When it comes online in 2016, this plant will be able to supply a significant proportion of global demand, at the same time as some current production reactors begin

to close. Production at the new plant will remain fully based on LEU-technology for both fuel and targets, thus continuing to advance global nuclear non-proliferation efforts through minimising the civilian use of HEU. The waste arising from this radiopharmaceutical production will be treated in a co-located treatment plant based on Australia's innovative Synroc technology, demonstrating Synroc's viability as an effective treatment of radioactive waste.

Thank you.