



IAEA General Conference
21-25 September 2020

Statement by HE Mr Richard Sadleir, Resident Representative of Australia to
the IAEA

As Prepared for Delivery

Mr President,

As a founding member of the IAEA, Australia strongly supports the Agency's roles: advancing our collective interests in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and safeguarding against nuclear weapons proliferation. This work remains vital as the international community faces fresh challenges associated with COVID-19. At the same time, on the 50th anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's entry into force, we note its centrality to the global non-proliferation architecture. As Co-Chair of the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear, Australia commends the Agency's efforts to increase representation and diversity in the IAEA, and to increase the role of women in the nuclear sector.

Mr President,

Strict adherence to IAEA safeguards obligations is a critical element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. To this end, the IAEA must be able to conduct its important safeguards work, including the analysis of all safeguards relevant material. Australia welcomes the work of the Director General in eliciting a commitment from Iran to resume full cooperation with the Agency's safeguards inspections. We emphasise Australia's strong and continued support for the professional work of the Director General and IAEA staff as they seek to implement the Islamic Republic of Iran's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol.

Australia particularly welcomes the Agency's continued safeguards implementation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and that our Director General of the Australian Safeguards and Non-proliferation Office, Dr Robert Floyd, continues to chair the Director General's Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation.

Full statement for upload

Mr President,

Australia sees the Additional Protocol as the contemporary standard for verification, which we should all aim to universalise. We welcome the IAEA's successful completion of three Physical Inventory Verification inspections, three design information verification visits, and one complementary access at Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) in June 2020 (as planned) as well as the inaugural inspection of uranium in radiopharmaceutical waste with the Agency's customised active well coincidence counter at ANSTO in August 2020.

Mr President,

Australia is deeply concerned by North Korea's announcement that it no longer feels bound by its moratorium on nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches. We urge North Korea to return to full compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, permit an early return to IAEA safeguards inspections, comply fully with all UN Security Council resolutions regarding its weapons programs, and sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The international community must continue to implement UN sanctions on North Korea until it takes clear steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation.

Mr President,

Australia is proud of its excellent nuclear safety and security record, again recognised by the NTI Nuclear Security Index. As the first supplier to produce molybdenum-99 exclusively from low enriched uranium, we urge all Member States in the process of converting their High Enriched Uranium-based methods to continue to eliminate an unnecessary nuclear proliferation and security risk.

Mr President,

Australia strongly supports the IAEA's work on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We appreciate the Agency's flexible approach to the Technical Cooperation program, facilitating access to nuclear techniques for the fast, effective diagnosis of COVID-19. For our part, Australia is at the vanguard of COVID-19 research, making our world-class nuclear science infrastructure – including the Australian Synchrotron, the largest device of its type in the Southern Hemisphere – available to scientists looking to understand the virus, possible vaccines, and treatments.

Full statement for upload

Mr President,

Adaptation is essential in the pandemic context. We welcome the Agency's remote monitoring and information sharing innovation – which highlight, as we heard at the International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS), the increasing importance of cyber security to the nuclear industry. Although the Extraordinary Meeting of the Joint Convention was unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic, we look forward to the significant review conferences to come.

Thank you Mr President.