



**Statement by the Head of the Australian delegation,
Ambassador David Stuart, Governor and Permanent Representative
to the International Atomic Energy Agency, to the 59th Regular
Session of the IAEA General Conference**

16 September 2015

Mr President

My delegation congratulates you, Ambassador Filippo FORMICA, Governor and Permanent Representative of Italy to the IAEA, on your election as President of the 59th General Conference. We have confidence that, under your leadership, the Conference will be given every opportunity to reach successful outcomes on all its agenda items. I shall confine my remarks to the allocated time. The full version will be on our website.

We welcome new members to their first General Conference, including Vanuatu from our region, Guyana, and the Republic of Djibouti, and note the approval of applications for membership by Turkmenistan, Antigua and Barbuda, and Barbados at this Conference.

Mr President

Australia is a strong supporter of the IAEA's work in spreading the peaceful benefits of nuclear technology to all States, and of the IAEA's **Technical Cooperation Program**. It addresses many basic needs – health and nutrition, soil conservation and water management, environmental protection – and makes an important contribution to economic and social development, including many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be adopted in New York next week.

Australia is also an active participant in the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific (RCA) which is the main program for the implementation of the IAEA's peaceful uses development objectives in our region.

In support of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund, Australia is pleased to announce that we will pay our share of the 2016 target, amounting to EUR 1,685,742, in full and on time. We encourage others to do the same.

As part of our ongoing commitment to the TC Programme, Australia has also made some significant contributions under the **Peaceful Uses Initiative** (PUI) this year, including 600,000 EUR to the modernization of the nuclear applications laboratories

at Seibersdorf. We have also contributed to TC projects in the Asia-Pacific region. These contributions bring Australia's direct financial contributions to the Initiative to about 1 million Euros since 2011, not including substantial in-kind support such as training programs during this period. We encourage other Member States to make contributions to the Initiative.

Mr President

All members of the Agency must work together to ensure an **effective safeguards system**, including by supporting its independence and providing adequate resources. Credible verification underpins non-proliferation goals 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 that are obliged to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements to do so without delay. The combination of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an Additional Protocol is recognised in international practice as the NPT safeguards standard.

We commend States that have brought the Additional Protocol into force since the last General Conference - namely Cambodia and Djibouti, bringing the number of States with an Additional Protocol in force to 126. We welcome also that the Federated States of Micronesia recently had its comprehensive safeguards agreement approved by the Board, and we hope that this can be brought into force in the near future. 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.

Australia will continue to work with the Agency to encourage all countries to **develop and implement effective safeguards**. We also continue to promote best practice in safeguards implementation as well as the overall non-proliferation regime. We promote such cooperation in our region through the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network, and welcome Japan as the Network's new Chair. The Australian Safeguards Support Programme, in place since 1980, continues to make valuable contributions to areas such as analytical services for environmental sampling and safeguards guides.

We are pleased to hear the Director General's announcement that the Agency has concluded new State-level approaches with two States, including with the Republic of Korea, a State with a large nuclear footprint. We welcome this progress in the application of safeguards under the SLC.

Mr President

Australia welcomes progress in the last year towards addressing international concerns about **Iran's** nuclear program, notably the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed between the E3/EU+3 and Iran in July. We support the Agency taking a central role in its monitoring and verification of the JCPOA, as it has done in the earlier Joint Plan of Action. This will be a significant task for the IAEA that will require additional funding. Australia is considering making a voluntary contribution to support this work.

The success of the JCPOA will depend on Iran's compliance with its terms and those of the parallel Roadmap it agreed with the Agency. Iran has undertaken to accelerate and strengthen efforts to resolve all past and present outstanding issues, including clarifying the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program (PMD). It must abide fully by these undertakings.

North Korea remains in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations and continues to act in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions, including through its threats to undertake a "new form of nuclear test bolstering its nuclear deterrence" and by developing its nuclear facilities. This poses an ongoing threat to international peace and security and to the stability of our region. 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 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 maintaining 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

Nuclear Security remains an important area of focus for Australia. Australia will contribute actively to the success of the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit, including by co-chairing a working group on the role of the IAEA in nuclear security policy after the conclusion of next year's Summit. The scheduled IAEA Ministerial Conference next year will reinforce this role.

Australia commends States that have ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material since the last General Conference – namely Italy, Qatar, San Marino, Singapore, Turkey and the United States of America – bringing the number of States that have done so to 87. We welcome this progress, and note that the Amendment's entry into force requires adherence by a further 14 States Parties. We strongly encourage those States yet to ratify the Amendment do so as soon as possible.

Mr President

Australia acknowledges the Agency's continuing efforts in implementing the Action Plan on **Nuclear Safety**. The Director General's report into the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant provides a thorough, objective and factual analysis of the causes and consequences of, and lessons learnt from, the accident. We note that the assessment of the radiological impact of the accident correlates closely

with that of the 2013 report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR).

The observations made in the report remind us that while there are comprehensive systems and processes to achieve nuclear safety globally, we cannot become complacent in their application. Indeed, we see the lessons identified by the report as a significant contribution towards, and a basis for Member States to achieve, continuous improvement in nuclear safety. Ultimately, the impact of the Director General's report will be measured by the actions that Member States take to minimise the risk of accidents and improve their capacity to respond to them.

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. Australia held a uranium side-event during the General Conference earlier today (1.30pm, 16 September).

Mr President

Australia's plans to construct and commission a large-scale molybdenum-99 processing plant and co-located Synroc waste treatment plant remain on schedule. When it comes on line in late 2016, the processing plant will be able to supply a significant proportion of global demand, securing the supply of **radiopharmaceuticals** at the same time as some current production reactors begin to close. Production 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. In the coming year, construction will commence on the Synroc waste treatment plant, based on Australia's innovative Synroc technology, demonstrating Synroc's viability as an effective treatment of radioactive waste.

I can also report progress in bilateral civil **nuclear cooperation with India**, based on the safeguards agreement and additional protocol that India signed with the Agency in 2009. Australia is responding to India's energy needs, by agreeing to supply uranium that will help India to meet its rapidly growing electricity demand. We anticipate entry into force in the near future of the bilateral agreement on civil nuclear cooperation which Australia signed with India last year. It will ensure that all Australian uranium, and nuclear material derived from it, will be used only for peaceful purposes, will be subject to IAEA safeguards and will be protected in accordance with international standards of physical security.

Mr President

The General Conference continues to be a valuable opportunity to take stock of the work of the Agency and to evaluate its contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Agency continues to face many challenges, but my delegation remains confident that it has the leadership, capacity and the resilience to meet the objectives outlined in its Statute. We, the Member States, must continue to support it in its efforts towards these objectives.

Thank you.