



Opening Remarks of Australia at the IPNDV Annual Plenary Meeting Sydney, Australia - December 5, 2022

Delivered by Senator the Hon Tim Ayres

I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of this land and pay my respects to the Elders past and present.

I acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here with us today.

First Nations people have lived in this land for over 65,000 years working in partnerships with each other and with country as custodians of this land.

The impact of nuclear weapons, through testing in Australia, the Pacific and in other nations, has been disproportionately felt by First Nations peoples and they bear witness to the devastation nuclear weapons represent, both in development and if ever used in conflict.

A reminder at the human scale of why nuclear disarmament is so important.

I would like to welcome you all to the first full in-person meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification in some time.

As many of you are aware, IPNDV brings together experts from a range of concerned countries to focus on providing practical solutions to the huge challenges of nuclear disarmament.

I particularly would like to thank the US State Department and the Nuclear Threat Initiative for their leadership in driving this important work.

I would like to welcome our distinguished guests from the diplomatic community who have travelled here today from Canberra to join this plenary session and to those who have joined us from Sydney.

I hope you find the discussions today useful and informative.

And finally, I would particularly like to welcome the IPNDV delegations,

many of whom have travelled such long distances to Australia to join in the very important work that is planned for this week.

As many of you can attest from your long flights to get here, Australia is a long way from much of the world in distance;





but when it comes to ambition, we are a part of the global community

and the peace and stability of that global community, and the rules-based order which supports it, is vitally important to us, as it is to all.

Australia ratified the nuclear non-proliferation treaty almost fifty years ago and played a key role in the development of the comprehensive test ban treaty over 25 years ago.

These two treaties form the basis of international efforts to curtail the spread and limit the use of nuclear weapons. They have been effective in meeting these goals.

But we must be vigilant and proactive.

Australia remains profoundly committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Achieving this goal is as important today as it has ever been.

As I recently commented at the NPT Review Conference in New York,

the global security environment has further deteriorated.

And international security is being undermined by those who seek to resolve disputes by power and size instead of by international rules and norms.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and its nuclear brinkmanship is a stark example; Australia condemns this senseless aggression and calls on Russia to cease hostilities and withdraw immediately.

North Korea continues the development of its illegal and destabilising nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

And we remain deeply concerned by Iran's failure to comply with its NPT safeguards agreement in a full and transparent manner. This situation cannot persist indefinitely.

For Australia, these serious challenges only reinforce the need for us to work constructively together for a common purpose despite – making the world safe from nuclear weapons.

Despite our differences as sovereign nations, this work remains central to ensuring international security.





These global challenges are a stark reminder of the importance of the work you do here today.

Central to the non-proliferation agenda is verification.

Whether that be verification of disarmament, or verification for effective safeguards on nuclear material, equipment and technology, or verification of sites of possible nuclear explosions under the CTBT.

We will not be able to reach our ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons if we have no agreed frameworks, no agreed practical measures, no agreed technologies for verification.

To make verification possible between the nuclear weapons states, but also, between non-weapons states and weapons states, we must work in partnership towards an agreed framework, agreed practical measures and agreed technologies.

Without working in partnership, we will fail.

This is why Australia is a supporter of the work being done by the IPNDV. Partnerships based on common goals are the most assured path to success.

The benefits of verification go beyond the goal of nuclear disarmament. Verification measures are central to a world without nuclear weapons.

They allow for the peaceful development of nuclear technology including in human health, agriculture, and the environment. Technologies that have helped people around the world thrive.

Agreed frameworks, measures and technologies will allow us all to build confidence and build the trust that will allow us to live in a world free of nuclear weapons.

Australia continues a proud tradition of advocating for realistic and practical measures that take us closer towards our goals.

The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification is one of those realistic and practical measures.

The fourteen steps to disarmament and points for verification identified by IPNDV provide a framework for disarmament verification.





Through your systematic and careful work, this partnership has identified that disarmament verification is possible, it is practical and it can be achieved at the same time as the protection of national security interests.

Although there is still work to do, this is a significant contribution towards the goal of nuclear disarmament.

This is an important step along the way. Protecting sensitive technologies and national interests while providing verifiable disarmament is the core of the disarmament challenge.

On Friday this week you will have the opportunity to visit the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisations facility at Lucas Heights just south of Sydney.

I understand that there will be a demonstration of two technologies that may have a key role to play in the verification process.

The TRIS system and CORIS360 are impressive early efforts to enable verification technically while protecting sensitive information.

Harnessing the innovation in each of our countries is important. The challenges of verification are many and the technologies we require are niche.

If we are to find effective technological solutions, we must encourage this research and innovation and we must do so in partnership with each other.

So, I encourage you to take up this opportunity to see these technologies and I also encourage you to tour the ANSTO facilities which are home to Australia's leading nuclear industry and technology development.

I am encouraged by the progress that has been made by IPNDV since 2014. You have taken realistic and practical steps on the path to disarmament, progress that has in recent years been hard to come by.

I look forward to hearing about the progress towards the goal of verifiable nuclear disarmament over the week and I wish you all the best in your efforts towards this very important goal.

Thank you.

