



Parliament to review nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament treaties

The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties has been invited by the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to undertake an inquiry into Australia's involvement in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament treaties.

Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is one of the major challenges facing the international community. Australia has signalled the importance that it places upon this issue through the recent establishment with Japan of an International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. This Commission has a mandate to reinvigorate the global debate on the need to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons, advance nuclear disarmament and strengthen the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). The 2010 NPT Review Conference is a particularly important milestone in this process.

The Prime Minister has asked the Treaties Committee to contribute to Australia's non-proliferation and disarmament objectives by examining:

- how the international treaties on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament that involve Australia advance our objectives in these areas;
- how treaties might be made more comprehensive or effective; and
- how the Committee and the Parliament can contribute to the work of the International Commission.

Committee Chairman, Kelvin Thomson MP, believes the Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee can contribute to the work of the International Commission and the development of consensus on the way forward for the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

"I am honoured that the Prime Minister has asked my Committee to investigate important issues concerning nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. I believe the Treaties Committee can play an important role in engaging the Australian community and other Parliaments in the debate leading up to the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference."

"The Treaties Committee has already demonstrated the importance that it attaches to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime established by the NPT in an earlier inquiry this year. I look forward to this opportunity for the Committee to be at the forefront of contemporary public debate about an issue of global significance."

The Committee's terms of reference are attached. The Committee is calling for submissions from the public and interested organisations to be received by **Friday, 30 January 2009**.

The Committee is due to report its findings by 30 June 2009.

Further information is available on the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jsct.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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Terms of Reference

Inquiry into Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament

The Treaties Committee will consider:

1. the international treaties involving Australia which relate to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament;
2. how these treaties advance Australia's objectives in this field;
3. how the treaties might be made more comprehensive or effective;
4. how inter-parliamentary action can assist in strengthening treaty-based aspects of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime; and
5. how the Committee and the Parliament can contribute to the work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.