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For Immediate Release

PM support for US-India nuclear deal fuels nuclear proliferation

The shock announcement from the PM that Australia will support the US-India nuclear deal in next week's Nuclear Suppliers Group meeting has been condemned by organisations across Australia.

The NSG was established because of international concern about India's first nuclear explosion in 1974, using nuclear technology supplied by Canada and the US intended exclusively for peaceful purposes.

"Church, union, professional, environmental and peace organisations together declare that the US-India nuclear deal aggravates nuclear proliferation, fuelling nuclear dangers rather than climate change solutions" said Assoc Prof Tilman Ruff, a signatory of the statement and Australian Chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

In his Singapore lecture yesterday, Mr Rudd said the task of the new International Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Commission co-chaired by Australia and Japan was to build crucial support for the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. "The US-India deal is a body blow to the already strained nuclear non-proliferation regime," said A/Prof Ruff.

"It rewards India for developing nuclear weapons and initiating the nuclear arms race with Pakistan. India gets increased access to nuclear technology without making any disarmament commitments in return. A few extra reactors nominated by India for application of safeguards don't affect in any way its growing capacity to produce nuclear weapons. Pakistan is already ramping up its production of fissile material in response" said A/Prof Ruff. "Pakistan and Israel are likely to seek the same exceptions, and incentives for countries to abide by their NPT obligations are being shredded."

"If Australia is serious about nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, we must walk the talk and block this dishonourable deal" he continued.

Signatures include: The Uniting Church; UN Association; The Wilderness Society; Helen Caldicott; Medical Association for Prevention of War.

The statement and full list of signatories is available at:
http://www.icanw.org/Australia_reject_US_India_deal

For comment:

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