

News Release

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CANADA WELCOMES INDEFINITE EXTENSION OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet welcomed today's historic decision to extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) indefinitely and unconditionally.

The NPT is the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Its indefinite extension has been a key Canadian objective, as outlined in the Government's recent Foreign Policy Statement. A Canadian-presented resolution calling for the treaty's indefinite and unconditional extension was adopted without a vote at an international conference at the United Nations in New York.

"This decision represents a tremendous achievement for the international community. By making the NPT a permanent feature of international law we have ensured our continuing ability to contain the spread of nuclear weapons," said Mr. Ouellet.

Canada has played a pivotal role in creating the momentum that led to the decision at the four-week NPT Review and Extension Conference, which is scheduled to conclude on May 12th. In addition to presenting the resolution that formed the basis for the indefinite extension decision, Canada helped enlist over 100 states as co-sponsors. At the Conference, agreement was also reached to provide for more enhanced, regular NPT Review Conferences as well as a Statement of Principles re-dedicating states parties to the important non-proliferation and disarmament goals of the treaty.

"Canada's negotiators, led by Ambassador Christopher Westdal, deserve our congratulations for their excellent work at the Conference. Now that the NPT is extended indefinitely, we must focus our attention on addressing the other challenges on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda," said Mr. Ouellet.



Mr. Ouellet outlined these challenges as follows:

- concluding negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty;
- commencing negotiations on a 'Cut-Off' Convention to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons;
- strengthening International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards to be able to more effectively verify the civilian nature of the nuclear programs in NPT non-nuclear weapons states; and
- making membership in the NPT universal.

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