11 October 2022

Dear Mr Hutchinson

Thank you for your email of 21 September 2022 regarding your concerns about nuclear proliferation. I am replying on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Minister, Senator The Hon Penny Wong, in her address to the United Nations General Assembly on 23 September, highlighted the danger that nuclear weapons pose to us all and the urgent need for progress on nuclear disarmament. In her address, the Minister underlined the Government's priorities, including our commitment to the Pacific, as well as our condemnation of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and the dangers of Russian President Putin's nuclear threats.

The Foreign Minister further stated that Australia has always pursued a world without nuclear weapons, and that we will redouble our efforts towards this goal, strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

The Government is assessing its position on the TPNW taking account of the need to ensure an effective verification and enforcement architecture, interaction of the Treaty with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and achieving universal support. The Government's decision to observe the TPNW first meeting of State parties in June demonstrates the constructive engagement with the treaty during the current phase of assessment.

Let me assure you that Australia takes non-proliferation and disarmament seriously, including its binding obligations under the NPT and the Treaty of Rarotonga not to acquire nuclear weapons.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Sue Langford
A/g Assistant Secretary
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