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High Level Review of UN Sanctions Launch

Statement by Katrina Cooper, Senior Legal Adviser, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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Excellencies, distinguished guests,

I would like to thank Finland for chairing today's event. Australia is pleased to join Finland, along with other sponsors of the High Level Review of UN Sanctions - Germany, Greece and Sweden - in co-hosting this event.

Let me also extend our thanks to the *Watson Institute for International Studies* and *Compliance and Capacity Skills International* for their initiative in establishing the High Level Review, and their hard work and partnership in the Review and today's event.

Reform of United Nations sanctions was a critical priority for Australia's term on the Security Council from 2013 to 2014; and so the High Level Review, the first significant review of UN sanctions as a whole, was particularly timely for us. This Review was conducted at a time when the Council's use of sanctions to address threats to international peace and security was at its highest number in the history of the UN.

Australia was very pleased to chair one of the three Working Groups contributing to the Compendium's production. It is on this Working Group that I will focus my remarks today.

We led consultations on how the UN system itself comes together, internally and with Member States, to give effect to the Security Council's sanctions regimes.

Contrary to popular perception, most Council sanctions regimes are in place to support States as they recover from conflict or other crisis. In these cases, sanctions implementation should be a collaborative and cooperative effort between the Council and the UN system on the one hand; and the affected State, its regional partners and regional organisations on the other.

The focus of our consultations was therefore with Member States to which sanctions applied and their immediate neighbours, who would be the key beneficiaries of an effective sanctions regime but were also pivotal in making the sanctions effective in the first place.

Australia's consultations also involved the Security Council sanctions committees and expert groups, the Ombudsperson, the Secretariat, and technical assistance providers.

Australia is very pleased with the final product, the Compendium of the High Level Review.

Our working group highlighted ways in which the Council and the UN system could improve the way in which it makes the case for its sanctions regimes, particularly amongst key stakeholder states.

At the technical level, it highlighted how to make sanctions easier to comply with; and how to improve communication on the requirements of sanctions.

We welcome a number of steps already undertaken by the Security Council and the Secretariat to take on board several key recommendations in the Compendium.

Now, we see more public briefings of the Security Council, sanctions committees are more actively engaging with key stakeholder States, and the Secretariat has made implementation simpler by consolidating sanctions lists.

From Australia's perspective, many other key recommendations address the critical themes identified in the Working Group we led.

- For example, the need to enhance implementation through capacity building assistance and training to stakeholder States:
 - The assistance is there, but is under-utilised, suggesting that we need greater awareness of its availability;
- A further example is the value of integrating sanctions with other UN responses, such as peacekeeping and political missions:
 - The integration of sanctions with other UN responses to the same crisis is essential to prevent conflicting actions, and enhance the overall effectiveness of UN collective security.

The Compendium is far more comprehensive than the points I have just touched on, and my fellow panel speakers will highlight many other important elements. We hope that the Security Council, Member States and other stakeholders will use it as a valuable blueprint for the way forward.

The key to the effectiveness of the UN sanctions system will ultimately be in how it engages with Member States.

The Compendium has usefully laid the foundations for continued reform of the UN sanctions system, and we now need to harness the momentum, to enhance the UN sanctions system.

Thank you.