



Statement by

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Ambassador for Disarmament and Permanent Representative of New Zealand
to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition

at the

2nd Preparatory Committee of 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

General Debate

Geneva, 23 April 2018

Mr Chair,

I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition – Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, and my own country, New Zealand.

The NAC congratulates you on the assumption of your role and we assure you of our full cooperation and support as you fulfil your duties.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the New Agenda Coalition, through which our members sought to respond to the continued threat to humanity posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the urgency of fulfilling the obligation enshrined in Article VI of the NPT.

It is of utmost concern to the NAC that the threat to humanity posed by nuclear weapons has not abated and that the risk of a nuclear weapon detonation in fact continues to grow. As highlighted by UN Secretary-General Guterres, global anxieties about nuclear weapons are the highest since the Cold War. The Doomsday Clock is now set at the closest to midnight it has been since 1953; our citizens understand only too well that the current situation raises real risks for us all.

Nuclear disarmament aims to save all our lives – and now, more than ever, is the time for States Parties to demonstrate their commitment to this Treaty, and its fundamental object and purpose, by implementing it.

The nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments that States Parties have under the Treaty are clear – laid out in Article VI and elaborated since then in the Treaty's Review Conference outcomes. The consensus agreements reached at past Review Conferences, in particular the package of decisions and resolution from 1995; the 13 practical steps from 2000; and the Action Plan from 2000 are part of the NPT acquis – they are binding commitments, common ground, on which all States Parties have agreed.

Throughout each NPT review cycle, and in our annual UN General Assembly resolution, the New Agenda Coalition has consistently called for the accelerated implementation of States Parties' nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments. These include de-alerting, entry into force of

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the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a fissile material ban treaty, the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East, and entry into force of the legally-binding protocols to existing zone treaties as well as the review of any related reservations, transparency and nuclear disarmament verification among others. The list is long; the track record on it poor.

Many of these commitments were made almost two decades ago; some have been reaffirmed on a number of occasions. Now is not the time to reinterpret them; to abandon, delay or roll back their implementation; or to condition their fulfilment on the false notion of the independent achievement of an improved global security environment. International security will not be advanced, nor the Treaty preserved, by nuclear-weapon States creating doubt about their intention ever to fulfil their disarmament obligations. Such doubts could well undermine the NPT's grand bargain and may even cause others to start conditioning the implementation of their side of the bargain. Surely, the imposition of conditions for the implementation of any Treaty obligations could only undermine the credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime with the NPT as its foundation.

Mr Chair,

Implementation of these agreed undertakings is not a new agenda, nor is it an exclusive one. The existing obligations and commitments are mutually reinforcing and do not represent the priorities and views of just one group of States. Rather they reflect the common agreement of all NPT States Parties on measures to advance implementation of Article VI.

Highlighting what we have agreed to do, and what it is that is the common ground for us all, is not to ignore the tensions evident within the NPT community. Differing views on a number of key issues have been apparent for many years, including on the pace of disarmament and the emphasis to be given to the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation. NPT States Parties also differ in their views on the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Some, including the members of the New Agenda Coalition, see it as a contribution to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, complementing and strengthening the obligations contained within the NPT and contributing to the implementation of Article VI. Others do not.

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This is not a disagreement needing resolution at this meeting. What *is* needed is a focus on the fulfilment by States Parties of their obligations and commitments under the NPT, including those agreed at Review Conferences. We all share the common objective of upholding and preserving the NPT – and the best way to protect the NPT is to implement it.

Thank you Mr Chair.