



IRELAND

Cluster I

STATEMENT

by

Ireland

**2019 Preparatory Committee Meeting of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

New York, 2 May 2019

Check against delivery

**PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS
885 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017 TELEPHONE 212 421-6934 FAX 212 752-4726
newyorkpmun@dfa.ie**

Thank you, Chair.

Ireland aligns with the statements delivered by the European Union and Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Chair,

The NPT's disarmament provisions are at the heart of the bargain upon which the Treaty was founded. Ireland's deep and abiding commitment to the Treaty and to its full and effective implementation is unwavering. Yet it is deeply disappointing that almost 50 years on, the bargain under which the NPT was founded is not being implemented with the necessary balance across all three pillars of the NPT.

Introduced by Ireland at the height of the Cold War, when the accepted wisdom was that the number of nuclear armed states would grow rapidly and exponentially, the NPT represents what is possible through effective multilateralism. As Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister said during his address to the Conference on Disarmament earlier this year, the NPT recognizes that increased security for one state does not have to come at the cost of the security of others. It represents that all states, regardless of size, have a stake in global disarmament and can play their part.

With this in mind, it is our firm belief that all States Parties, regardless of their size, have a responsibility to ensure the Treaty's provisions are honoured and fully implemented. This is essential if the NPT is to retain its standing, and for its successes to be preserved for future generations. As we gather to prepare our assessment of the implementation of the Treaty, it is clear that the disarmament pillar stands out for all the wrong reasons. Urgent action is required to redress the growing imbalance between the implementation of the three pillars.

In 2000 and 2010, we came together as a community and invested time, energy and resources in finding agreement and furthering progress on nuclear disarmament, as mandated by Article

VI. These were hopeful occasions, testament to what can be achieved through meaningful cooperation, flexibility and sufficient political will. Yet, the 2000 and 2010 commitments remain unfulfilled and in some case are being openly questioned. The nuclear weapon States continue to place nuclear weapons at the heart of their military doctrines. Concrete steps that have long been on the international agenda such as the entry into force of the CTBT and the negotiation of an FMCT have not been taken. Ireland reiterates that these steps must be pursued with a renewed sense of urgency.

Chair,

Few issues require more determined focus than nuclear disarmament. Over the past 50 years, we have gained a much fuller understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon use – particularly the long-term effects on human health, the environment, and sustainable development. Civil Society organisations have worked tirelessly to highlight the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons use.

However, despite the grave existential threat posed by nuclear weapons, some States have argued that the present environment is not conducive to disarmament, and that pursuing the elimination of nuclear weapons is not realistic at this time. Ireland fully aligns with the Secretary-General's view that disarmament is more essential in a deteriorated security environment. We equally believe that it is unrealistic to wait for, or expect, a perfect security environment to emerge; no such utopia exists, and if such conditions were necessary for progress, we would never be able to agree or achieve anything, including the Treaty currently under consideration. We would also note that ongoing modernisation programmes and the erosion of nuclear arms control agreements neither enhance security, nor do they not make the international environment any more conducive to nuclear disarmament, and they take us further away from our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Chair,

Over the years, we have created a number of arrangements and legally-binding measures to support the non-proliferation and peaceful uses pillars. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which Ireland intends to ratify imminently, fills the notable gap in supporting mechanisms for the disarmament pillar. The NPT always envisaged a separate Treaty to give full effect to its disarmament provisions; the TPNW does so in way that is fully compatible with the NPT, and acknowledges the NPT as the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament regime. Ireland firmly believes that the TPNW will strengthen the NPT when it enters into force.

In addition to bolstering Article VI, the TPNW includes a number of ground-breaking provisions which reflect the broader understanding of nuclear weapons use we have developed over the past 50 years – including the environmental impacts and awareness of the disproportionate effects of ionising radiation on women and girls. The TPNW recognises that it is essential for women and men to be represented equally in nuclear disarmament discussions. This can be better mainstreamed into the NPT process. We have a responsibility to ensure that our delegations and decision-makers represent those affected by the issues being discussed here. We would be delighted if you could join us at our joint side event with the Disarmament Impact Group, Australia, the Netherlands and Sweden on ‘Advancing the Conversation Gender Diversity in the NPT on 3rd May, and Ireland’s side event on ‘Gender and the NPT: Building Momentum to 2020 and Beyond’ on 9th May.

To conclude, Chair,

We must keep the disarmament commitments at the forefront of our minds as we look forward to the Review Conference next year. We must back up our words here with concrete action. As Seamus Heaney, the Irish Nobel Laureate would put it: “Anyone with gumption and a sharp mind will take the measure of two things: what’s said and what’s done”. What has been done leaves much to be desired. Now is not the time to further postpone the commitments made in 2000 and 2010. They are essential to ensure the Treaty to which we are all committed remains relevant, vibrant and at the heart of international peace and security.