



New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

UNGA70: First Committee

New Zealand statement

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It gives me great pleasure to take the floor under your Chairmanship, Ambassador van Oosterom, and to continue the great tradition of support and friendship between us, as neighbours in the United Nations if not actually on the world map. We look forward to working, under your leadership, to ensure that this 70th session of the First Committee is significant, not only as an important anniversary, but also as a turning point towards real progress on disarmament.

My Delegation would very much welcome such progress. As regards *nuclear* disarmament, progress is particularly necessary now in view of our collective failure to advance this issue when we met earlier this year for the five-yearly review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

New Zealand cannot agree with the surprising assertion we have heard here that this year's Revcon is to be regarded as having achieved its objective given that it carried out a *review* of developments relevant to the Treaty. Rather, the position of New Zealand and the overwhelming majority of NPT States Parties is that a successful Review Conference is one that advances *implementation* of all three pillars of the Treaty, including most notably the one least advanced – nuclear disarmament.

Some may be inclined to say that the aspirations for progress on nuclear disarmament, shared by countries like NZ and our fellow members of the New Agenda Coalition, are now unrealistic. But even NPT States Parties more content with the status quo than are we, must surely have found themselves dismayed at the lack of ambition reflected in the outcome language put up for adoption at the RevCon as regards nuclear disarmament. For many of us, that language would indeed have represented a step *backwards* from that agreed in 2010.

As it is, Mr Chair, we are left without any outcome at all from the Conference – and equally, therefore, without its having defined for us any specific pathway for forward movement to give effect to Article VI of the Treaty. It had indeed been the NAC's hope that the RevCon would agree to move forward on the preparatory work for the legal instrument necessary to give effect to this obligation. But we had certainly not expected to encounter there a suggestion (albeit from only a very small number of States Parties) that the negotiation of a legal instrument for Article VI's "effective measures" relating to nuclear disarmament was not only unnecessary - but actually risked undermining the NPT.

To ensure that this misunderstanding cannot vitiate the long-standing support for the Treaty's provisions, New Zealand will chair a panel session next Thursday 22 October intended to throw light on the international law applicable, in reality, in this context. The Discussion Paper, which we will circulate shortly and which will be the subject of that panel, clarifies in some detail exactly how it is that a legal instrument on "effective measures" would reinforce the obligations of the NPT: this to the benefit of the credibility and standing of its disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Before moving on from nuclear-related issues, I would wish to note NZ's deep disappointment at the limited progress made since the 2010 NPT RevCon towards a Middle East WMD-Free Zone. NZ's strong support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is exemplified in the Resolution which we will present - this year as lead sponsor, on behalf too of Brazil - on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere.

Still in the nuclear field, I would also wish to recall NZ's strong support for the agreement reached in July between Iran and the P5+1 on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

Continuing my survey of the 2015 year, but in the interests of adhering to your timeline, Mr Chair, I am saving for a subsequent statement much of what I would otherwise wish to say regarding the Conference on Disarmament. New Zealand will, of course, in our capacity as the Conference's outgoing President, be presenting to this Committee the annual resolution on the CD Report.

More generally in the context of the UN disarmament machinery, may I register NZ's hope that this session of the First Committee can also take action to secure a sustainable future for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Member States are unified in their recognition of UNIDIR's valuable contribution on disarmament and non-proliferation issues – what is also now required is a commitment to ensure that the Institute receives the financial resources necessary for its survival.

I would like to move on now to the more positive side of this year's disarmament ledger. There has been much more to laud in 2015 in the field of *conventional arms*. Most momentous was the convening in August this year of the First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We congratulate Mexico on its successful hosting of the Conference. The decisions adopted at this First Conference, like the Treaty itself, are a testament to what it is that the international community can achieve when it agrees to act decisively to address human security challenges.

We congratulate, too, the interim Head of the ATT Secretariat, Mr Simeon Dladla, assuring him of our full support as he takes up his new role in December, as well as Nigeria for having now assumed the Presidency of the Treaty. New Zealand remains committed to full implementation and universalisation of the Arms Trade Treaty and I note that, to this end, we will be co-hosting with Australia an ATT side event at the forthcoming International Conference of the Red

Cross and Red Crescent which is being held in Geneva this December.

Also positive, was the successful hosting just last month of the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions - and we extend our thanks to the Croatian Government for this.

New Zealand welcomed the adoption there both of the Dubrovnik Political Declaration as well as the forward-looking Action Plan. We are confident that our Convention is in good heart and that our primary focus can continue to be to strengthen the increasingly well-established norm against any use of cluster munitions by any actor, and also to widen the number of its States Parties.

In conclusion, I should like to revert to the broader context of the agenda before us at this year's Committee. I have already mentioned the two resolutions for which we are lead sponsor. As a core co-sponsor, New Zealand would also wish to commend to colleagues here the NAC resolution "Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World"; the resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons resolution.

This latter text builds, as we all know, on the highly significant Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons which is supported now by 159 countries. It is indeed the catastrophic consequences, and increasing risk, of a nuclear weapon detonation which remain the primary motivation for urgent progress on nuclear disarmament. It is New Zealand's hope that any body - such as an Open-Ended Working Group - to be established by this Committee will have a mandate which reflects the urgency of progress on nuclear disarmament and offers us the real prospect of this.