



Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations
TE AKA AORERE

**UNGA 70: First Committee
Cluster IV Statement – Conventional Weapons**

**H.E. Dell Higgin
Ambassador for Disarmament**

26 October 2015

Mr Chair

All Member States wishing to advance human security and humanitarian outcomes will have welcomed the fact that 2015 has been a year in which there have been a number of important milestones in the field of conventional arms. It is of some relief to us that there is considerably less stagnation in this field than on other topics on the First Committee's agenda.

We draw satisfaction, first and foremost, from the entry-into-force of the Arms Trade Treaty and the successful convening in August this year of its First Conference of States Parties (CSP1). New Zealand remains strongly committed to the Treaty and proud to be a member of the ATT community. We are grateful to Mexico for having provided the Treaty's Provisional Secretariat over the past many months and, most recently, for their successful leadership of the Cancun Conference. The decisions taken at CSP1 have positioned our Treaty well to reap for us all the human security and development outcomes expected to flow from it.

We look forward to working with the Nigerian Presidency of the Second Conference of States Parties - including pursuant to New Zealand's role as a Vice-President. More generally, we remain committed to working to advance universalisation of the Treaty and hope that our ATT Model Law can be useful to this end and to promoting its implementation.

Those of us placing a premium on standard-setting (whether framed within or outside of the United Nations) addressing the protection of civilians, will have been pleased, too, at the passage of another successful milestone – the convening of the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). We congratulate the Croatian Government on its successful hosting of this and welcome the adoption there of a number of important outcome

documents. We congratulate, too, Ms Sheila Mweemba on having now taken up the role as Head of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit.

We are grateful to our Dutch next-door neighbours for taking on the Presidency of the Convention and are confident that, with them, this treaty is in very safe hands. New Zealand looks forward to playing its part, too, in stewardship of the CCM - both through our ongoing role as Coordinator of National Implementation Measures and through our new project in Africa providing assistance to countries that require new legislation to ratify and implement the Convention. Our continued condemnation of all, or any, use of cluster munitions - or of antipersonnel mines, pursuant to the Ottawa Landmines Convention - is aimed at enshrining IHL's emphasis on the protection of civilians in the specific context of these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.

There are other specific contexts in which the standards of IHL for the protection of civilians must be fully applied and protected. Austria hosted useful discussions in Vienna just last month focused on the harm which civilians face in many conflicts from explosive weapons used in densely populated areas. We must explore ways, as the UNSG has said, to address this issue and minimise this harm.

We share, too, the concerns of many regarding the complex legal and political challenges posed by the possibility of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). Given the pace of technological advances, the international community must ensure that decision-making and accountability in the development and use of lethal weapon systems remains within the boundaries of international law including, in particular, IHL. With a view to the convening next year of the Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), we support a strengthened mandate for further work within the CCW on this issue.

In the context of all these issues, and indeed in so many other weapon and conflict-related areas, my Government remains immensely grateful for the unstinting commitment of the ICRC to the advancement of IHL and the protection of civilians (and others) in conflict situations. Member States' own National Societies for the Red Cross and Red Crescent do hugely valuable work to back up the ICRC in a range of contexts. In this, the 100th year of the New Zealand Red Cross, I place on record the value we attach to their work.