



**PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

CLUSTER ONE DEBATE

STATEMENT BY H.E. DELL HIGGIE

AMBASSADOR FOR DISARMAMENT

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As delivered

In addition to this national statement under cluster one, New Zealand fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, which introduces the NAC's two working papers to this Committee. We are confident that both papers – on nuclear disarmament in general, and on the importance of transparency – will helpfully inform our work.

Earlier this week the Secretary-General's High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane, reminded us of an important fact: the NPT process does not simply exist to reaffirm the status quo. She also recalled Dag Hammarskjöld's comments that, in this field, if you do not move forward, you go backward.

New Zealand's shares the assessment of many countries in this room that, of the NPT's three pillars, nuclear disarmament shows the least forward movement. Indeed, in many respects, we fear that it is not moving forward at all. That said, New Zealand continues to hope, as we move towards next year's final PrepCom and the Review Conference in 2015, that – to paraphrase the words of the UN Secretary-General earlier this year in Monterey – nuclear disarmament can yet get on-track.

I would like to highlight certain elements of the Action Plan that are of considerable significance to my Delegation and which we would particularly wish to see "on track".

De-alerting

It is hard to see why several thousand nuclear weapons need to remain on high alert so long after the Cold War. Lowering the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems would in itself enhance global security – because it would lower the risk of use by accident or miscalculation. It would also send a concrete signal that the nuclear-weapon States are indeed envisaging the possibility of a nuclear weapon-free world by moving away from national security strategies and doctrines conditioned upon their continuing existence.

New Zealand is pleased to have supported, with Switzerland, the recent study co-authored by Hans Kristensen and published by UNIDIR, on reducing the alert rates of nuclear weapons. We fully associate ourselves with the statement delivered by Nigeria on behalf of the De-alerting Group which underlines the importance of making progress on this element of the Action Plan.

CTBT

The entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a priority for New Zealand. The CTBT's importance for the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime was rightly recognised by the Review Conference in 2010. While some progress has been made towards its entry into force since then, particularly the very welcome ratification by Indonesia, we take this opportunity to call again on the eight remaining Annex II States to join the CTBT without delay. We also welcome the recent ratifications by Chad and Brunei Darussalam, which add to the momentum towards the CTBT's universality.

CD

New Zealand remains deeply concerned about the continued stasis in the Conference on Disarmament. This deplorable state of affairs has not only prevented the Conference from fulfilling the tasks identified for it in the Action Plan, but has also led quite rightly to questions, shared by my own country, about the Conference's continuing relevance.

With the CD mired in its current impasse, it is only natural that avenues for progressing our shared disarmament goals will be explored elsewhere. We are very pleased, therefore, to have strongly supported the initiative of the General Assembly to convene here in Geneva an Open-Ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. By offering all States a fresh new forum for discussing nuclear disarmament, the OEWG can only add value to our work, including in the NPT context, to amplify the prospects for real progress on nuclear disarmament.

We would reject any suggestion that in seeking to live up to our collective responsibility under the NPT to advance nuclear disarmament we are somehow undermining the Treaty. How could this be so – when the Treaty itself has nuclear disarmament as a central goal and a crucial element of its “grand bargain”? If the non-nuclear-weapon States are to contribute to nuclear disarmament, as the Treaty requires of us and consistent with the affirmation of our collective responsibility on this by the International Court of Justice, then we all have a responsibility to find the means to do so. And by offering us a way to move nuclear disarmament forward, the initiatives taking place this year serve to strengthen the NPT, not undermine it.

Through engaging our political leaders on the importance of this issue, the High-Level Meeting on nuclear disarmament this September in New York also has the potential to provide momentum to our work, and we look forward to its doing so. Equally, New Zealand fully supports the convening next year of the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT.

Humanitarian consequences

The recognition by the 2010 Action Plan of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons was, for New Zealand, a cautionary – and necessary – reminder of the real world implications of the work we undertake in this, and other, nuclear disarmament fora. The Conference hosted by the Norwegian Government in Oslo this past March served to reinforce the Review Conference's expression of concern by exploring the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in a more systematic way and one which puts the real issues of human security to the fore. Its key message – that no state or international organisation could feasibly address the humanitarian impact of a nuclear weapon detonation – must underpin all of our work on nuclear disarmament and

should serve to underline its urgency. New Zealand looks forward to the follow-up conference to be convened in Mexico next year and welcomes the Government of Mexico's initiative on this.

New Zealand fully subscribes to the statement already delivered by South Africa in the general debate here on behalf of over 70 countries concerning the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Transparency

Action 5 is one of the most important elements of the Action Plan, and it reflects specific undertakings assumed by the nuclear-weapon States in 2010. Its importance not only lies in its listing of several concrete areas of engagement, but also its recognition of the importance of transparency in fulfilling nuclear disarmament commitments. The nuclear-weapon States' report back to next year's PrepCom on these undertakings will be a critical juncture as we head towards 2015. We welcome the on-going meetings of the P5 as they consult including as to their fulfilment of Action 5 and urge them to give their report next year the substance and thoroughness it requires. We note that the New Agenda Coalition has provided a working paper to this Committee on this most important matter and recall also the Working Paper on this topic submitted by New Zealand and Australia during the last review cycle, which proposed a reporting template for use by the NWS.

Of course, the nuclear-weapon States are not the only States with transparency obligations. New Zealand has submitted a national report to this PrepCom in accordance with Action 20 of the Action Plan and we call equally on other States to do the same.

Today, the fact that nuclear weapons are possessed by only a small handful of states is one of the NPT's most important achievements and is an important indicator of the success of its vertical non-proliferation provisions. But the fact of the continued existence of nuclear weapons, over 30 years after the Treaty's entry into force, is a concern for all States.

The achievement of nuclear disarmament would be a global common good of the highest order. All of us – States, civil society and individual citizens alike – have a stake not only in reaching that goal but in the work that leads to it. Through concerted efforts, and a focus on concrete results, we can get our work back on-track. For the health of this Treaty, it is vital that we do so.