



New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Mōkiri o Aotearoa

UNGA 68: First Committee Thematic Debate: Conventional Weapons

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Mr Chairman

The signal achievement in the conventional weapons sphere this year was undoubtedly the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April. New Zealand's strong support for the ATT was founded in our belief that humanitarian concerns must continue to drive our collective work on disarmament and arms control. That the ATT was adopted as conflict raged on in Syria, the scene of so many human rights violations the likes of which the ATT was drafted to assist in preventing, only tragically underlines the desperate need for legally binding common international standards on the transfer of conventional weapons. We are proud to be one of the 114 States that have signed the Treaty, including, most recently, Cambodia. And we are pleased to welcome the most recent ratification of the Treaty, by Grenada just last week – making it the eighth country to do so. We look forward to many more ratifications over the months ahead as we move swiftly towards entry into force and beyond.

For its part, New Zealand is working hard to make the necessary changes in our domestic law to enable us to ratify the Treaty, and we certainly look forward to being numbered among the fifty States whose ratification will allow the ATT to enter into force. We intend to be an active Treaty partner, providing encouragement and assistance to interested countries on ratification and implementation of the ATT. New Zealand is working to develop model legislation for small states and will host a meeting on that subject in early December. We are already pleased to note that the atmosphere of cross-regional collaboration that pervaded the negotiation process has been carried over into this new phase – and we look forward to cooperating with our partners as we take the Treaty's aims forward.

As we enter into the UN Programme of Action's third review cycle, we have a useful set of frameworks and tools at our disposal to take forward implementation at the national, regional and global levels. Our challenge is now to use these to make concrete progress where it matters most – effective implementation on the ground – and to ensure the Programme of Action is able to keep abreast of other relevant developments, notably the recent development of the ISACS and the adoption of the ATT. We also need to strengthen our ability to effectively assess implementation needs and effectiveness. I assure the recently-designated Chair of next year's Biennial Meeting of States of my delegation's full support in addressing these challenges.

Both the Cluster Munitions Convention and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention continue to serve as beacons in our efforts to rid the world of those weapons that cause indiscriminate and long-lasting humanitarian harm. New Zealand is heartened by progress in taking forward the aims of the CCM, which in its short life span has already achieved 84 ratifications. We warmly congratulate Zambia on its recent assumption of the CCM's presidency and on its excellent hosting of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties in Lusaka last month. We welcome St Kitts and Nevis, who ratified the CCM just a few weeks ago, to our growing family and encourage those 29 States who have signed the Treaty but not yet ratified it to do so without delay. New Zealand is pleased to be able to continue our work next year as CCM Coordinator for National Implementation Measures,

as we look forward to the 5th Meeting of States Parties and then on to the Treaty's first Review Conference. We continue to stand ready to assist States with implementing the treaty in their domestic legal frameworks.

The international community's growing support for the CCM – and its loud and clear condemnation of any use of cluster munitions – is clear evidence of a growing international norm against these weapons. New Zealand strongly condemns the use of cluster munitions in Syria over the past year, which has only served to deepen the human suffering that has so plagued the ongoing conflict in that country.

The Mine Ban Convention is of course the trailblazer in the field of humanitarian disarmament. New Zealand is pleased to note, as we head towards the 15th anniversary next March of its entry into force, the excellent progress that continues to be made in implementing the Treaty. The work of clearing minefields, supporting affected communities and destroying stockpiles is progressing well, but it needs ongoing support. We look forward to working closely with Mozambique, particularly in our role as Co-Chair of the Convention's General Status and Operation standing committee, as we prepare for the Mine Ban Convention's Third Review Conference in Maputo next June.

The humanitarian considerations that underscore our commitment to addressing these issues have been frequently evoked during this Committee's work. We welcome this renewed emphasis on human security, and we acknowledge here civil society's important role in working with governments to develop and implement effective solutions to the challenges we have addressed. The advent of new weapons technologies such as fully autonomous weapons systems only underline the need for us to continue to work together to ensure that the principles which guide us continue to be upheld. We look forward to continuing that partnership in this constantly evolving field.