



NEW ZEALAND

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

CLUSTER ONE: NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

**STATEMENT BY DELL HIGGIE
AMBASSADOR FOR DISARMAMENT**

3 MAY 2012

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chairman

In addition to this national statement under cluster 1, I am pleased also to associate my delegation with the statement made by South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and which outlined in some depth the Coalition's priorities as we embark on this new review cycle. We are confident that the working papers presented by the NAC – a general paper on nuclear disarmament as well as a more specific paper on nuclear disarmament verification – will contribute positively to our ongoing deliberations in the lead up to 2015.

Mr Chairman

The significance of the review cycle process was put very eloquently by High Representative Kane earlier this week when she remarked that without it the NPT would “be but an empty shell, without any effective means of maintaining genuine accountability for the fulfilment of commitments and legal obligations under the Treaty. It is the review process that enables States Parties collectively to take stock of progress made and to identify new achievements that are needed”.

The 22 action points on nuclear disarmament contained in the 2010 outcome document are our touchstone, our guide, for the progress necessary under this NPT pillar during this current review cycle – and they represent, too, a launching point for our ambitions for the next cycle.

In setting out a path for further action on nuclear disarmament, the 2010 Action Plan reaffirms many previous undertakings – including those which were part of the significant outcome of 2000 – and which form part of the fabric of the NPT.

Mr Chairman

The achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons has long been a matter of fundamental importance to New Zealand. With this in mind I would like to highlight some elements of our 22 nuclear disarmament action points which are of particular importance to us.

New Zealand is pleased to continue working as a member of the De-alerting Group in order to promote the lowered operational readiness of nuclear weapons. The statement to be delivered by our current Coordinator, Switzerland, on behalf of the Group will clearly underscore the importance of progress on this element of the 2010 Action Plan.

Lowering the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems would lower the risk of an accidental or unintentional launch of nuclear weapons. Importantly, it would also represent a very practical application of a diminished role for nuclear weapons in defence and security strategies. New Zealand continues to call on all nuclear weapon States to take urgent steps to reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons as an integral step towards the achievement of a nuclear weapon-free world.

New Zealand was pleased that the 2010 NPT outcome reaffirmed the essential role of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty within the nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation regime. We are strong proponents of the CTBT's entry into force and we welcome recent ratifications of the Treaty, particularly that of Annex 2 State, Indonesia. We are also very pleased at the recent signature of the Treaty by Niue, our neighbour in the Pacific. We continue to call on all States that have not yet done so, particularly the remaining Annex 2 States, to ratify the CTBT without any further delay.

The 2010 Action Plan contains several action points related to the Conference on Disarmament. New Zealand remains deeply concerned at the ongoing impasse in the CD which has for too long failed to meet its negotiating mandate - notwithstanding recent intensive efforts. If CD members cannot commence substantive work then, as the UN Secretary General remarked recently, "the General Assembly must exercise its primary responsibility in carrying forward the disarmament process". The CD's dysfunctionality cannot be allowed to stand in the way of progress on the disarmament agenda.

New Zealand welcomed the inclusion in the 2010 outcome of several action points on transparency and accountability and which will assist us all in measuring progress in meeting the Treaty's objectives. We recall in particular, the emphasis given to the need for nuclear weapon States to agree on a standard reporting template and to determine appropriate intervals in which to report on their nuclear arsenals and their efforts on nuclear disarmament. We urge the nuclear weapon States to take these steps as a matter of priority.

More generally, in terms of Action 20 of the 2010 outcome, New Zealand has submitted a report to this PrepCom outlining our own efforts to meet our obligations under the Treaty; we encourage other States parties to do the same.

Mr Chairman

We are honoured this week by the presence of many Hibakusha who know only too well the devastating – or as the 2010 Action Plan puts it – "catastrophic" consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Their first-hand experiences should leave us in no doubt that the use of nuclear weapons would be unconscionable.

There has been widespread interest in the Action Plan's acknowledgement of "the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law". As High Representative Kane observed earlier this week, "it is now beyond question that international humanitarian law has already arrived here in the NPT review process – and it is here to stay".

The Action Plan has usefully built on language from the International Court of Justice. We are pleased to be associated with the statement delivered by Switzerland earlier this week on behalf of 14 States and which emphasised the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament.

That statement referenced the recent resolution of the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. I note, Mr Chairman, that during next week – on the 8th of May – we observe the World Red Cross Red Crescent Day. My Government would not wish to let this International Day pass

here without acknowledging the very important work done by the ICRC, and by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to promote global respect for IHL.

It is clear that the further elaboration of the IHL element of the Action Plan will be a focus of our efforts in the years leading to 2015. The announcement by Norway that it will host a meeting in 2013 on the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons is also to be welcomed.

Mr Chairman

I have spoken about the impact on us all of listening to the testimony of those who have themselves experienced the horrific impact of nuclear weapons. We must also pay heed to the views of younger generations – it is their future that we have an opportunity to influence for better, or for worse. It is very pleasing to see such a strong group of young people engaged here at this PrepCom and I had the pleasure to meet with many of them earlier this week.

New Zealand continues to value the role of civil society in keeping nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation high on the international agenda. Their assistance is invaluable to governments in helping us to bring to fruition the promise of the Action Plan and our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.