



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

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY H.E. DELL HIGGIE

AMBASSADOR FOR DISARMAMENT

28 APRIL 2014

Check against delivery

First of all, Mr Chairman, I would like to offer New Zealand's congratulations to you on your assumption of the Chair and to assure you of our full support as you carry out your responsibilities over the forthcoming two weeks.

New Zealand is pleased to associate itself with the statement delivered by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, by Switzerland on behalf of the De-alerting Group, and by Australia on behalf of the Vienna Group of 10.

At this point in the 5-yearly cycle of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty reviews, there are some among us who are disposed to think optimistically about what has been done to advance the Treaty's objectives since 2010. And there are others of us here who think in much more pessimistic terms about what it is that has not been done over the past four years – indeed over the long period, 45 years, since the NPT entered into force.

Some, I am told, already assert that in this current review cycle it is the pessimists who will hold sway. They predict that the inevitable outcome of our meeting next year will be disarray – with no agreement reached on an outcome document for the present quinquennium and, accordingly, no guidance for the way forward. It has even been suggested that this result is almost destiny (given the recent history of every second Review Conference ending in failure). 2010 was a good year, so the argument runs, which means that in 2015 we will have a bad crop.

New Zealand rejects any such fatalism. The fate of NPT reviews is no more written in the stars than is the outcome of any other meeting. We cannot change the pathway of a Halley's Comet – but the trajectory for the 2015 review of the NPT is entirely in our own hands.

There are a number of opinions about what it is that puts the NPT off-track, and what we must do to keep it on-track. For New Zealand – for our fellow members of the New Agenda Coalition and for many others here – the prescription is clear. The NPT will remain on-course when it is evident to all that we are making satisfactory strides forward on all three of its fundamental elements – including, of course, on nuclear disarmament.

Our Treaty – like any other international regime or institution – was never intended as an end in itself. It is as valuable, and valued, as what it can deliver for us all: most notably the safety and security of a world without nuclear weapons. And it was made abundantly clear at last year's High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament just how very widely shared an aspiration this is.

How, then, is our Treaty regime doing?

We have been looking forward to the nuclear weapons States' reporting of their fulfilment of the undertakings they made in 2010. But even the greatest optimist would struggle to say that there is sufficient progress on nuclear disarmament and, in particular, on Action 5 of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference. I think it should be clear to all that the health of our NPT regime requires that greater importance is visibly attached to action to advance the nuclear disarmament pillar of the NPT.

It remains a matter of disappointment to my Delegation that the Nuclear Weapon States have chosen not to participate – neither this year nor last year – in all the fora where we meet to carry forward our collective responsibility, under Article VI, to advance nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we congratulate Mexico on its successful hosting of the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in February of this year and welcome the offer by the Government of Austria to host a further meeting toward the end of the year. It is clear to my Delegation that these conferences are a pivotal part in efforts to make progress on Article VI and to help put the NPT back on-track. I should also refer to the set of four statements which have previously been delivered on the humanitarian nuclear disarmament issue; and which will be the subject of New Zealand's statement to be delivered later this week under cluster one.

It remains a matter of regret that a date has not yet been set for the 2012 Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons as well as all other WMD. It is a matter of great importance that the Facilitator and Co-conveners are able to announce a date as soon as possible.

New Zealand strongly believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. Through its assurance and verification of compliance with the NPT, an effective non-proliferation regime is critical to the full realisation of the Treaty's goals. We are committed, through our own actions, to ensuring the integrity of the Treaty's safeguards system and accordingly are pleased to report that, in the period since the 2013 PrepCom, New Zealand has signed the modified Small Quantities Protocol to our Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and has joined the Zangger Committee. We reaffirm that all States Parties have a duty not only to live up to their own safeguards obligations but to address compliance issues wherever they arise. New Zealand has welcomed recent progress in international efforts to resolve outstanding safeguards concerns in Iran. We encourage all relevant parties to continue their constructive dialogue with a view to providing assurance about the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

New Zealand recognises the right of all States Parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with the Treaty. We continue to emphasise, however, that the enjoyment of that right carries with it the obligation to ensure the highest possible standards of safety and security. New Zealand is closely monitoring implementation of the Nuclear Safety Action Plan agreed in response to the tragic nuclear accident at Fukushima. We also remain actively engaged in efforts to strengthen the global nuclear security regime, for example through our strong support for the Nuclear Security Summit process and the work of the IAEA.

Mr Chairman

Our duty to reflect here on the progress that has been made under the NPT is a collective one. Four years since the 2010 Action Plan was agreed, and one year before our next Review Conference, this preparatory meeting is a significant way station in our efforts to evaluate what has, and has not been, accomplished on all three pillars of the NPT during this current review cycle. This is the best opportunity we have to commit to redressing the balance sheet - and ensuring the success of the 2015 Review Conference.