

# **New Zealand General Debate Statement - 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non- Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 3-28 May 2010**

**Statement by Hon Georgina te Heuheu, Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, 4 May 2010**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset let me congratulate you, Mr President, on your appointment as President of this critical meeting for our collective security. It is a pleasure to see a representative from the Asia-Pacific region presiding over this Review Conference. You can be assured of New Zealand's full support as you guide us toward a successful outcome.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty.

The world has changed dramatically over that time. The first half of the period was dominated by the Cold War. The second half has witnessed worrying episodes of nuclear proliferation and a growth in the risk of nuclear terrorism. But one constant has been the NPT's place at the heart of our collective efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

New Zealand has long maintained an independent and principled voice on nuclear issues.

These are issues that New Zealanders feel passionately about. The New Zealand civil society contingent here today is one demonstration of this concern. We come to New York committed to listening and to dialogue. In my more than twenty-five years of public service and experience in implementing our own special Treaty of Waitangi I have also counselled listening rather than talking past each other, on focussing on what unites rather than what divides.

Mr President

The issues at the heart of the Treaty are of a global nature. We are all impacted by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We would all suffer the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war. The Treaty provides a vehicle for a global solution although it is tantalisingly short of universality.

New Zealand recognises the need to fully implement the three pillars of the Treaty – nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses – in achieving our goals.

We are committed to all aspects of the Treaty, including the decisions and outcomes that were agreed at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. They remain an integral and lasting part of the Treaty's overall fabric. We must implement them, and we must build on them.

Our Prime Minister John Key stated recently, "... a world free of nuclear weapons is a world that we should all want to see ...". New Zealand will be working with all other States parties towards a robust outcome here in New York that brings us closer to that goal – a world without nuclear weapons.

New Zealand values highly its cooperation with our New Agenda Coalition partners on nuclear disarmament, and we are pleased to associate ourselves with the statement that will be delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Coalition. Our aim is an aspirational, but practical, forward-looking outcome, that further advances the NPT's objectives.

Mr President

While New Zealanders would certainly wish for the immediate abolition of nuclear weapons, we accept that an incremental approach to nuclear disarmament is the only realistic option. Systematic and progressive steps that can be evaluated periodically are necessary.

We continue to call for nuclear reductions leading to the elimination of nuclear arsenals, the negotiation of a fissile material treaty, the lowered operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems, security assurances and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. We call for a diminished role for nuclear weapons in security policies which goes hand in hand with reducing the demand for them.

The announcement yesterday that Indonesia is initiating the process of ratifying the Test Ban Treaty is a cause for celebration. We would urge others especially those that are Annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty as a matter of priority.

Mr President

An effective non-proliferation regime is essential. Accountability, through the Treaty's safeguards system, is a key element. We all have a role to play in supporting the system to provide assurances that nuclear activities undertaken by states are purely for peaceful purposes. We all have responsibility to hold to account any state party not living up to its commitments. We call on Iran to meet its international obligations.

New Zealand supports robust safeguards agreements, including the Additional Protocol as a condition of nuclear supply, as well as strong export controls to prevent the proliferation of nuclear material, equipment and technology.

In this context New Zealand is pleased to associate itself with the statement made by Australia on behalf of the Vienna Group of 10.

Mr President

New Zealand acknowledges the many benefits that can come from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We need to ensure that nuclear technology remains accessible to all while at the same time ensuring that such technologies are managed safely and securely, and do not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Effective physical protection of nuclear

material and facilities is essential and we must work to combat illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and other radioactive substances.

Mr President,

New Zealand joined others the world over last year in welcoming the vision outlined by President Obama in Prague of a world free of nuclear weapons. Similarly, New Zealand welcomes the steps that have been taken by nuclear weapon States in respect of their nuclear disarmament obligations since the 2005 Review Conference. The most recent of these is the historic agreement between the United States and Russia on a new strategic reductions agreement and the US's Nuclear Posture Review.

Just yesterday US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that the Administration would seek Senate consent to ratifying protocols to the Treaties of Rarotonga and Pelindaba. This was very welcome news for our regions. We also congratulate the US on its announcement that it will pursue concrete steps to improve the transparency of the US nuclear arsenal. These are all tangible demonstrations of the US commitment to working toward the Prague vision.

Mr President,

These landmark developments, together with initiatives such as the UN Secretary General's five-point plan, have lent significant positive momentum to our work here at the Review Conference. They have the potential to set in train systematic reductions, each a milestone along the road to the realisation of our collective goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Let us make sure that the steps in this process are firm, not faltering, bold rather than begrudging. Forty years on, this is surely not too much to ask.