

## **PACDAC Meeting Minutes**

**08.30 – 11.45, Friday 2 September 2022 (virtual)**

### Members in attendance

Hon Phil Twyford (Chair)  
Mary Wareham (Deputy Chair)  
Jamila Homayun  
Andrew Chen  
Edwina Hughes  
Kevin Clements  
Lucy Stewart

### Apologies

Martin Donoghue

### Officials in attendance

Katy Donnelly (MFAT)  
Jordan Allison (MFAT)  
Mike Shaw (Minister's office)

### **1. Welcome from Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control**

The Minister welcomed Committee members to the third strategy/policy PACDAC meeting of the year.

### **2. Apologies**

The Minister noted apologies from Martin Donoghue.

### **3. Adoption of agenda**

The Committee adopted the agenda.

### **4. Adoption of minutes**

The Committee adopted the minutes of the policy/strategy meeting held on 10 June, as well as the minutes of the two funding meetings held on 25 August and 30 August respectively. The Committee agreed that all confirmed minutes should be posted on the PACDAC section of the MFAT website.

Action: MFAT to load confirmed minutes of the three meetings onto its website.

### **5. Consideration of any Official Information Act requests relating to the Committee**

The Minister noted that two OIA requests concerning PACDAC had been received by MFAT since the previous PACDAC meeting on 10 June. The responses to both requests had been consulted with Committee members.

## **6. Update from Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control on recent and forthcoming disarmament activities and events**

The Minister provided a summary of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW MSP1) and the Tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). On the former, the Minister described the event as a caucus of countries and civil society celebrating the birth of an important piece of international law. Quoting ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), the Minister characterised the declaration adopted at the conclusion of MSP1 as the strongest denunciation of nuclear weapons ever agreed at a multilateral meeting. In addition to supporting the development of machinery to take forward the work of the TPNW (as agreed in the Vienna Action Plan), New Zealand's strategy was to keep encouraging more states to join the TPNW, continue efforts to strengthen the norm against nuclear weapons, and help create a political environment that would enable multilateral disarmament. Kevin Clements, another participant at MSP1, also shared his reflections, noting that the event had established the seriousness of intent of the TPNW membership to achieve global nuclear disarmament.

On the NPT Review Conference, the Minister noted the emphasis New Zealand had placed on the centrality of Pillar I (disarmament) and the responsibility of Nuclear Weapon States to progress disarmament under Article VI of the NPT. The Minister detailed the dynamics over the 4-week Conference that had culminated in a draft final outcome document. While the document did not reflect New Zealand's aspirations, particularly on nuclear disarmament, it did include some modest steps like new pathways for work on nuclear risk reduction, and enhanced transparency and accountability. An agreed outcome document would also have helped shore up the NPT at a time when it was under real stress. New Zealand was therefore profoundly disappointed at Russia's decision to block the outcome in the final hours of the Conference. This had only exacerbated the strain on the NPT and broader global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The Minister also highlighted the exceptional work of Anna Hood, who had joined New Zealand's official delegation to the Conference as a member of civil society.

The Committee thanked the Minister for his summary and emphasised the importance of intersessional work to advance the objectives of both the TPNW and NPT.

## **7. MBIE Briefing on Space Policy Development**

At the request of PACDAC, MBIE officials joined the meeting to present on New Zealand's space policy development, including the recently announced Space Framework Agreement signed with the US.

PACDAC noted that their key concern was the consistency of New Zealand's space policy with its disarmament obligations, and international human rights and humanitarian law.

The Committee queried the process for approving payload launch applications received by MBIE, and noted that it would provide advice on improving this process in its public submission on the space policy review.

At the Minister's suggestion, MBIE offered to host two dedicated consultations sessions on its space policy review with PACDAC and the broader disarmament community respectively to help inform public submissions. PACDAC members undertook to help promote the broader disarmament community's participation in MBIE's consultations.

Action: MBIE to organise dedicated consultation session for PACDAC on New Zealand's space policy review.

Action: PACDAC members to encourage broader disarmament community's participation in consultations on New Zealand's space policy review.

## **8. AUKUS, the Australian Nuclear Submarine Programme and Prospects for New Zealand Membership**

At the request of PACDAC, the Minister provided an overview of New Zealand's position on the AUKUS submarine programme.

Noting the usefulness of PACDAC providing advice to the government on this matter, the appointed members of the Committee undertook to write a letter to the Prime Minister to reiterate New Zealand's international obligations and share their views on AUKUS.

Action: Deputy Chair Mary Wareham to draft a letter on behalf of PACDAC members to the Prime Minister regarding AUKUS.

## **9. PACDAC event: EWIPA**

Deputy Chair Mary Wareham provided an update on preparations undertaken to date and next steps for a PACDAC event later this year to commemorate the finalisation of the *Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas* (EWIPA). Given the desire to hold the event in proximity to the signing ceremony of the Declaration in Dublin, the Committee agreed to commence preparations for an event at Parliament once the date of the signing ceremony was made public.

Action: MFAT, Minister Twyford's office and PACDAC to form a sub-group to plan and prepare the EWIPA event at Parliament once the date of the signing ceremony for the Political Declaration is confirmed.

## **10. PACDAC virtual event with Pacific civil society**

The Minister raised the possibility of a virtual dialogue with Pacific civil society to discuss Pacific nuclear legacy issues. The Committee noted its interest in participating in such a dialogue, with logistics to be organised by the Minister's office.

Action: Minister Twyford's office to progress planning for a virtual dialogue with Pacific civil society to discuss Pacific nuclear legacy issues.

### **11. Outreach to scientific community in New Zealand**

The Minister commenced a discussion on the possible activation of the scientific community in New Zealand with respect to disarmament issues. The Minister cited the work of the *Physicists Coalition for Nuclear Threat Reduction* as an example of the scientific community's potential to contribute to global efforts to advance nuclear disarmament.

The Committee agreed on the importance of developing and expanding the constituency on disarmament and arms control issues. One important consideration would be the level of engagement sought from the scientific community - given the community's limited capacity to devote substantial time to new projects, PACDAC would need to manage its expectations accordingly.

### **12. Disarmament education and public awareness of disarmament and arms control issues in New Zealand**

Lucy Stewart provided a brief update on intersessional work led by her to identify viable opportunities to strengthen disarmament education in New Zealand. She had had one intersessional meeting to date and would provide a more substantive report back on her efforts in due course. Lucy also informed the Committee that she would shortly circulate a draft letter addressed to universities encouraging engagement with PACDAC for the purpose of improving disarmament education in New Zealand. The Committee noted that such engagement could help promote the visibility of PADET grants in universities, thereby encouraging students to undertake projects and research relevant to PADET's objectives.

Action: Lucy Stewart to draft and circulate to Committee members a letter on behalf of PACDAC to tertiary faculties for the purpose of encouraging a conversation about the benefits of teaching peace, disarmament and arms control issues.

### **13. Identify action points from meeting**

MFAT noted that it would be in touch with PACDAC at a later date to confirm the action points.

### **14. Any other business**

Per the action point from the 10 June PACDAC meeting, MFAT officials provided a response on behalf of NZDF to PACDAC's query concerning whether NZDF training provided to Ukrainian soldiers included training on compliance with international humanitarian law (including on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, especially given New Zealand's support for the *Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas* (EWIPA)). PACDAC requested the response be provided in full below:

*On 15 August, the Government announced the deployment of 120 NZDF personnel to the United Kingdom to help train Ukrainian infantry recruits. The training programme is designed to provide recruits with the core skills to be effective in frontline combat. The training is based on the UK's basic soldier training course, which includes weapons handling, combat first aid, and the Law of Armed Conflict training.*

*This follows a completed deployment of 30 NZDF personnel in May to provide specialist technical training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) on the operational aspects of the L119 light gun, equipment in respect of which only NZDF instructors retain expertise. That training was delivered to qualified soldiers already trained in foundational warfare disciplines. Ukraine is a party to the relevant Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, and carries the attendant obligations to ensure that its forces are appropriately trained in the Law of Armed Conflict.*

The Committee expressed the view that even if any training being offered is technical in nature, there must still be a component on compliance with international humanitarian law.

Separately, the Committee drew attention to the current, largely unregulated flow of weapons into Ukraine, some of which were reportedly being diverted from their intended destinations. Such diversion highlighted the importance of monitoring and regulation of weapon flows.

The Committee sought details on MFAT's recently convened Working Group on Autonomous Weapons Systems. MFAT noted it would soon update its website to include the composition of the Group, adding that the Group had had one introductory session and one substantive session to date. Committee members asked for PACDAC to be given the same briefings and access to documents as the AWS Working Group. MFAT undertook to consider how the Committee could engage with the Working Group bearing in mind the mandate of the Group.

Action: MFAT to consider how PACDAC could engage with the AWS Working Group.

The Committee also expressed an interest in whether New Zealand's Disarmament Strategy would be updated, and asked how PACDAC could be involved in that process. The Minister noted that this process was currently under way and undertook to provide an update to the Committee at the next PACDAC quarterly meeting.

Action: The Minister to provide an update to PACDAC on the refreshed Disarmament Strategy at the next PACDAC quarterly meeting.

PACDAC inquired about the possibility of PACDAC engagement in New Zealand's defence policy review. MFAT undertook to convey PACDAC's interest to the Ministry of Defence.

Action: MFAT to advise the Ministry of Defence of PACDAC interest in engagement on New Zealand's defence policy review.

Finally, PACDAC queried the timeframe for a response to their 11 July letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs urging New Zealand to place increased emphasis on humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, especially with respect to clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war. MFAT undertook to check with the Minister's office.

Action: MFAT to check on timeframe for response from Minister of Foreign Affairs to PACDAC's 11 July letter urging New Zealand to place increased emphasis on humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, especially with respect to clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war.