



Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Oslo, March 2013

Final session

The New Zealand Government is very grateful to Norway for hosting this meeting to explore the humanitarian implications of nuclear weapons and to put human security at the forefront of our thinking.

In inviting us to take stock of the consequences of and ability to respond to any use of nuclear weapons, Norway has renewed the opportunity for us to live up to our collective responsibility to advance nuclear disarmament.

Nonetheless, there have been some expressions of bewilderment about why it is necessary to have this conference now, and suggestions – including in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva just this morning – that it might risk undermining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

New Zealand has no intention of undermining the NPT. We retain our full support for it. And we will continue to work to advance *all* the obligations of the NPT. Both with the New Agenda Coalition, as well as with other groupings, we have sought for a long time now to promote concrete, practical steps to achieve nuclear disarmament such as through our efforts to encourage the nuclear powers to lower the readiness status of their nuclear weapons or to promote greater transparency of their nuclear holdings.

But even an optimist could be forgiven for saying that, in terms of reaching our ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament, we have not made huge headway. The goal set in Article VI of the NPT still seems a very long way off. It remains something that people talk about as being in someone *else's* lifetime – and not in ours.

Why should nuclear disarmament – any more than nuclear non-proliferation – be promoted only in *one* forum? We see no contradiction in promoting nuclear disarmament inside the NPT and outside it here in Oslo. Indeed we see our efforts here as very possibly helping us to implement the requirement – as the International Court of Justice told us in 1996 – to conduct in good faith “negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects.”

This meeting here in Oslo – in looking beyond the arithmetic of military security to fundamental notions of the survivability of our environment, our economies, and our populations – has served to remind us all that any use of nuclear weapons comes at a cost none of us should be prepared to pay.

We welcome the announcement just made by Mexico with regard to their intention to host a follow-up meeting. New Zealand will wholeheartedly join in all work, in the NPT context as well as in any process following on from this meeting and from Mexico's, that brings us closer to our goal: the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Thank you