



Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations
TE AKA AORERE

**UNGA 70: First Committee
Cluster I Statement – Nuclear Weapons**

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21 October 2015

This has been something of a watershed year for supporters of nuclear disarmament. Those of us who, for many years now, have steadfastly believed that the NPT would be the means to move the international community forward and frame the effective measures for the elimination of nuclear weapons, as called for in Article VI of the Treaty, received something of a wake-up call.

A significant number of States Parties to the NPT had gone to this year's Review Conference believing that, twenty years after the decision to extend the duration of the Treaty beyond its original expiry period, it was certainly time to look ahead to where we thought Article VI should be taking us.

For NZ, and our fellow members of the New Agenda Coalition, that destination has long been clear and we outlined our suggestions for the path forward in a Working Paper - WP 9 - which we presented to the NPT community. In that Paper, we sought to intensify the exploration of legal approaches able to close the 'legal gap' left in the NPT. We called for decisions to advance the preparatory work on the legal framework for a world without nuclear weapons and for appropriate follow-up in all disarmament fora, including in the United Nations General Assembly.

But it became clear at this year's RevCon that not *all* members of our NPT community were ready to agree to move forward on the "effective measures" of Article VI. 'Now', so it would seem, is still *not* the time to initiate within the NPT the multilateral negotiations confirmed as an obligation almost twenty years ago by the ICJ.

Instead, it looked as if NPT States Parties could agree only to the convening of an open-ended working group – but not one with a mandate offering the prospect of real movement forward in implementation of Article VI. Ultimately, as we all know, there was no agreement to such a working group – no agreement to any

outcome from the Review Conference - and the proposal for an OEWG on nuclear disarmament is now being taken up here in the First Committee.

In the face of the apparent lack of appetite for progress within the NPT on multilateral nuclear disarmament, New Zealand can see considerable advantage to an OEWG as one possible means to help sustain the credibility of the NPT and its obligations.

It can only do so, of course, if it is given a strong mandate – one that is not simply a repetition of the remit of the OEWG previously authorised by the UNGA in 2012 on this topic. And one that presents us with a real opportunity to move the international community forward in framing effective measures for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, we look to the resolution to be adopted here in this seventieth year of the UN to make it clear that the OEWG is able to do this - and that it will conduct its work on the basis of the time-honoured UNGA Rules of Procedure.

Reflecting the increased impetus for nuclear disarmament, as manifested in the Humanitarian Initiative, there are a number of other new resolutions on nuclear-related topics which are being presented to our Committee this year. We expect that, together, all these texts will represent a clear and unequivocal message from UNGA 70 on the need for progress on multilateral nuclear disarmament.

New Zealand indeed welcomes all efforts at moving us forward on nuclear disarmament. While it is not entirely clear at this point to my Delegation what pathway the Humanitarian Pledge resolution envisages for this, New Zealand's own recommendations for 'next steps' were made clear in the New Agenda Coalition's Working Paper – WP 9 – presented to this year's NPT Review Conference.

As regards the new text being presented this year on the ethical imperatives for a nuclear weapons free world, this is indeed, for many, a fundamental underpinning of the call for nuclear disarmament. The primary motivator for New Zealand will continue to be the obligation to give effect to Article VI of the NPT and the need to protect and advance the rules of International Humanitarian Law by moving to explicitly prohibit the most destructive of *all* weapons of mass destruction. The call by NZ and our NAC colleagues for this is spelt out clearly in the resolution we co-sponsor entitled “Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World”.