



New Zealand Intervention

**Agenda item 11 (d)
Victim Assistance, environmental remediation
and international cooperation and assistance**

**Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
Second Meeting of States Parties**

27 November – 1 December 2023

Thank you Chair,

First, allow me to commend the work of the co-chairs on their committed leadership of this important work stream over the last intersessional period. They should be assured of our continued support and engagement as we take this work forward.

The work stream on Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation is particularly important for New Zealand. More than any other aspect of the Treaty, it is work on this issue that best captures the humanitarian impetus at the centre of the TPNW. We are heartened by the Treaty's focus on involving affected communities, including Indigenous Peoples, and other stakeholders at all stages of the victim assistance and environmental remediation process.

Chair,

We hail from a region that is still living with the legacy of nuclear weapons testing. As we noted in our national statement, the work stream aligns with a key element of New Zealand's work on nuclear disarmament, namely

addressing these nuclear legacy issues. This is a long-standing and complex challenge which is achieving the global attention it deserves.

Decades of nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific cast a long shadow over our collective home, and has had human and environmental impacts still evident today.

In addition to impacting the health and environments of affected populations and countries in the region, the legacy of nuclear weapons has further troubling implications. For instance, because the Pacific is especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including sea level rise, this is impacting on former test sites. The integrity of structures which store or contain nuclear materials, is of growing concern.

Chair,

New Zealand is deeply concerned by Russia's de-ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a backwards step that undermines international efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear testing and nuclear weapons. We urge Russia to reverse its decision.

New Zealand has actively participated in the Article 6 & 7 work stream during the last intersessional period. We value the conversations and engagement we have been a part of, and remain encouraged by how this work stream is progressing. We support all of the decisions for adoption in the co-chairs' report.

We are pleased the co-chairs have developed provisional voluntary reporting formats, and look forward to helping to develop them over future intersessional periods drawing on our collective practical experience of

using them. In this spirit, we have completed and submitted a national response using the voluntary reporting format.

Similarly, we look forward to taking part in further work on the feasibility of, and possible guidelines for, the establishment of an international trust fund, with a view to reporting on these discussions at 3MSP and, if possible, reaching recommendations. This is an important piece of work to get right, and we are committed to working with the co-chairs and other TPNW stakeholders to moving it forward.

Thank you Chair.