

**Statement by Mr Johann Kellerman, Director for
Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control at the
Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation
On behalf of the New Agenda Coalition in the thematic
debate on nuclear weapons at First Committee of the United
Nations General Assembly 73rd Session**

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Mr. Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) members: Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and my own country, South Africa.
2. As mentioned at the General Debate, the New Agenda Coalition will once again table its draft resolution (L.64) entitled "Towards a nuclear weapon-free world: Accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments." The text of this draft resolution has been circulated to all delegations and I take this opportunity to speak to its key elements.

Mr. Chairperson,

3. The issue of nuclear disarmament has been high on the international agenda since the adoption of the very first resolution by the General Assembly in January 1946. This year also marks Twenty years after the Foreign Ministers of the NAC issued their 18-point declaration entitled "A Nuclear-Weapons-Free World: The Need for a New Agenda", and despite many efforts and initiatives which have been guided by the objective of achieving and maintaining a world free of

nuclear weapons, much remains to be done to achieve this goal.

4. The NAC firmly believes that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We are committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world and actively contributing to the achievement of that goal. The NAC draft resolution thus addresses a number of nuclear disarmament issues on which progress is essential for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. Chairperson,

5. In introducing the NAC draft resolution I would highlight that, given the lack of progress in the implementation of long-standing nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments, much of the text is unchanged from previous NAC resolutions. Although the NAC looks forward to this no longer being the case, for the time being we are obliged to continue our focus on the fulfilment of existing obligations.
6. The draft resolution reiterates that each article of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is binding on the States parties at all times and in all circumstances and that all States parties should be held fully accountable with respect to strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty. It calls upon all States parties to comply fully with all decisions, resolutions and commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. We continue to work for the universalization of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the full implementation of its obligations, in particular nuclear disarmament, and subsequent commitments agreed to at its Review Conferences in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

7. The resolution reiterates deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, including their gendered impact, and calls upon Member States to give due prominence to the humanitarian imperatives that underpin nuclear disarmament and to the urgency of achieving this goal. It recommends that measures be taken to increase awareness among civil society of the risks and catastrophic impact of any nuclear detonation, including through disarmament education.

Mr. Chairperson,

8. The draft resolution calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to take all steps necessary to accelerate the fulfilment of their commitments, including their commitment to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons. It urges nuclear-weapon States to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear-weapon systems as an interim measure and encourages them to make concrete reductions in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, pending their total elimination.
9. The draft resolution highlights concerns related to the rising tensions in international relations and with the increased prominence being given by some States to nuclear weapons in their security doctrines, including through modernization programmes. In this regard, the draft resolution also encourages all States that are part of regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their collective security doctrines, pending their total elimination.
10. It also encourages further steps by all nuclear-weapon States to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material

designated by each nuclear-weapon State as no longer required for military purposes, and calls upon all States to support, within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the development of appropriate nuclear disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements, thereby ensuring that such material remains permanently outside military programmes in a verifiable manner.

Mr. Chairperson,

11. With respect to the Middle East, the draft resolution urges the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as contained in the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, including through support for the convening of the conference on the establishment of such a zone.

12. The draft resolution stresses the fundamental role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and calls upon all States parties to spare no effort to achieve the universality of the Treaty.

13. The draft resolution urges India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States promptly and without conditions, and to place all their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. It also urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to, inter alia, abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, and to return, at an early date, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

14. The draft resolution urges all States to work together to overcome obstacles within the international disarmament machinery that are inhibiting efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in a multilateral context.

Mr. Chairperson,

15. The NAC resolution highlights an area of focus for us in the current NPT review cycle – namely, our call on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations flowing from Article VI without further delay and the importance of the NPT review process evaluating compliance with existing obligations and developing new measures. The NAC put forward specific recommendations to improve greater transparency, measurability and accountability for compliance. The draft resolution encourages States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to discuss options, including tools such as a set of benchmarks or similar criteria, to improve the measurability of the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments, in order to ensure and facilitate the objective evaluation of progress.

Mr Chairperson,

16. The draft NAC resolution urges Member States to pursue multilateral negotiations without delay in good faith on effective measures for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world, in keeping with the spirit and purpose of General Assembly resolution 1 (I) and article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In this regard the NAC is particularly pleased to be able to welcome the adoption on 7 July 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the progress made towards its entry into force.

17. It calls upon Member States to continue to support efforts to identify, elaborate, negotiate and implement further effective legally binding measures for nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairperson,

18. We further encourage all States to show their commitment to nuclear disarmament by supporting the resolution.

19. The New Agenda Coalition encourages all Member States to support the draft resolution. Since the NAC resolution seeks to uphold previous commitments and obligations that were agreed to by consensus, we therefore believe this resolution is drafted in a manner that all States should be able to support. We are confident that, as we move towards 2020, all delegations will want to join us in signalling a strong wish to see the full implementation of the NPT and to make progress towards the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

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