



UNGA71: FIRST COMMITTEE

**Nuclear Disarmament
Statement by New Zealand**

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I would like to begin, Mr Chair, by recalling events which took place at the NPT Review Conference of 16 years ago. At that Conference, and for the first time, the Five Nuclear Weapon States gave - as one of the 13 practical steps - an “unequivocal undertaking” to “accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals”.

That undertaking was not offered up by the Nuclear Weapon States in the *early* stages of the Review Conference - and some might even say that it was wrung rather reluctantly from them. But it *is* safe to conclude, I think, that each of them will have agreed to it only after a very careful analysis of its ‘costs and benefits’. The *benefits* were very clear: their undertaking was a key factor in securing a consensus outcome at the 2000 Review Conference, and in retaining the good health and standing of the NPT. The same is true for the 2010 Review Conference when they reaffirmed that same undertaking.

Quite possibly, the Nuclear Weapon States did not choose to explain to anyone at the Conference, either in 2000 nor indeed in 2010, exactly how it was that they would give effect to their undertaking - whilst meeting their expressed determination to ‘maintain strategic stability’ and base their actions on the ‘principle of undiminished security for all’. And I doubt that they were asked: it was sufficient that all Five accepted, very evidently, that it *was* do-able.

Their undertaking provided reassurance that Article VI's obligation to achieve progressively full nuclear disarmament – the basis upon which so many non-Nuclear Weapon States had entered the Treaty – would be given reality. Again, probably no one asked exactly '*when*' that would be, but there will have been confidence that good faith, the bread and butter of all international engagement, meant that this would be within a reasonable period of time.

Mr Chair, over the period since then, our perception that quite a number of agreed Review Conference outcomes - including the 'unequivocal undertaking' - have not delivered what we understood they promised has been compounded by frustration at the lack of meaningful progress on Article VI. Not only has nothing in the way of a vision, or framing, for a world free of nuclear weapons been put forward by the Nuclear Weapon States but nor have they outlined anything along the lines of a *plausible* roadmap or scenario – one that does not lead instantly into a seemingly insurmountable roadblock - for the way forward.

New Zealand agrees with what we have frequently been told, especially at NPT Review Conferences, that it is the responsibility also of *non*-Nuclear Weapon States to work assiduously for a nuclear weapon-free world. As a member of the New Agenda Coalition, we believe we have been doing this for some time - but we can accept that now, with progress on Article VI seriously faltering, there is a need for non-Nuclear Weapon States to step up and play a fuller part by moving forward with the rules-based framing for the end-state promised in Article VI.

Accordingly, New Zealand is pleased to have joined now as a co-sponsor of L.41, the resolution carrying forward the Nuclear Disarmament OEWG's recommendation for the convening of a UN conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. We hope that others will not simply criticise this new process for what they suggest it might *not* do (for instance, remedy the NPT's failure to persuade the DPRK to relinquish its

nuclear weapons or prevent nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorists) but will join with us in doing everything possible to ensure that it does both strengthen the NPT regime and contribute, yet more broadly, to global peace and security.

At the same time as we join with others here in moving forward on the framing for a nuclear weapon-free world, New Zealand will continue our full support for interim, or transitional, measures – steps we have long supported and pursued - such as on de-alerting, and in favour of greater transparency in nuclear holdings and a reduced role for nuclear weapons in security doctrines. And we will certainly participate, as whole-heartedly as ever, in all NPT deliberations on all its pillars.

There is no question of supporters of a prohibition treaty withdrawing from the NPT. That suggestion, made in the debate here this morning Mr Chair, is a false – but dangerous – fantasy.