



NEW ZEALAND

2021 UN General Assembly

Thematic Clusters 1-4

**Delivered by Lucy Duncan
Disarmament Ambassador**

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New Zealand aligns itself with the statement delivered by South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, and reiterates our ongoing commitment to working with the De-Alerting Group.

Chair, in recent years, we have seen modernisation of **nuclear** arsenals, the development of new types of nuclear weapons, the deterioration of collective arms control arrangements, and signs of renewed arms racing – a far cry from what is required under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The credibility of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime is at a critical juncture. The nuclear weapons states must come prepared to the NPT Review Conference and be ready to engage on implementation of their existing obligations and commitments, including their unequivocal undertaking to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. They must play their part in fulfilling the Treaty's grand bargain.

We are pleased to have had some cause for celebration this year marking the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We are looking forward to the first Meeting of States Parties in March, and encourage all countries to take part, as members, signatories or observers.

On **chemical weapons**, New Zealand remains resolute in our rejection and condemnation of their use anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances. We are deeply troubled by the recent uses of chemical weapons, including the poisoning of Mr Navalny, and the repeated and confirmed use of chemical weapons by Syria. These are an affront to the global rules and norms that we have collectively committed to uphold. We reiterate our calls on those involved to cooperate fully with the international community and the OPCW, and reinforce our strong support for the critical work of the Organisation.

The importance of cluster three **outer space** continues to grow as our dependence on space based infrastructure increases. All countries have a strong national and collective interest in ensuring the safe, sustainable, responsible and peaceful use of outer space. Disruption to space-based systems could have severe, and far-reaching consequences for

all. New Zealand strongly supports the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space and urges all states to abide by their obligations under international law.

New Zealand is firmly opposed to any action that may initiate conflict in, or extend conflict to, space. We are deeply concerned by anti-satellite missile testing, which poses significant risks to the safety of existing satellites and orbital launches. Given the degree to which modern economies and societies rely heavily on space-based infrastructure the risks created by kinetic ASAT tests impact us all. We urge all States to refrain from activities that undermine space security.

We firmly believe that it is in our collective interest to support measures to prevent any arms race in outer space, including transparency and confidence-building measures, in order to ensure its secure and sustainable preservation for peaceful uses. We strongly urge states to recommit themselves to this most urgent work. As an international community we need to move towards agreement on what safe, sustainable, responsible behaviour in space looks like in order to preserve access to space for all.

Chair, New Zealand supports the universalisation and full implementation of key **conventional weapons** treaties including the Arms Trade Treaty, Cluster Munitions Convention and Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, as well as the **CCW** and its protocols. The CCW must also keep pace and be responsive to technological developments. Addressing the serious ethical, legal and strategic concerns posed by **autonomous weapons systems** is one of the most pressing disarmament issues of our time, and achieving the necessary prohibitions, limits and controls is a key priority for New Zealand. We remain committed to achieving an ambitious outcome at the GGE and Review Conference, and working with all delegations towards this.

New Zealand is also firmly committed to supporting efforts to address the risks of the use of **explosive weapons in populated areas**, including the negotiation of Political Declaration on this issue.

Thank you.