

UNGA 73: FIRST COMMITTEE - EXPLANATIONS OF VOTE: CLUSTER ONE

NEW ZEALAND

L54 United Action with Renewed Determination Towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Madam Chair,

I take the floor to explain New Zealand's position on L 54 entitled "United Action with Renewed Determination Towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons".

New Zealand was not able to vote in favour of the predecessor of this resolution when it was presented to this Committee last year because that text represented a fundamental departure from its precursors. Its precursors had indeed been resolutions which had sought to find common ground for "united action" towards a nuclear-free world.

This year's draft, as last year's, takes a very different approach. It has quite a number of unsatisfactory elements but, most concerning of all, it redrafts important outcomes and undertakings in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) context, and also has unacceptably weak language on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As a committed supporter of both these Treaties, New Zealand cannot vote in favour of any resolution that risks undermining the contribution which the NPT and CTBT have made, and are positioned in the future to make, to the international community's long-standing efforts to advance nuclear disarmament and support non-proliferation.

New Zealand will again abstain on the vote on L 54. I would also note, Madam Chair, that our 'no' votes on the separate paragraph vote on OP 2 and OP3 are a reflection of our concern at the implications for the health and viability of the NPT regime of changing long-agreed language on fundamental NPT undertakings.

L46 Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World

I take the floor regarding resolution L 46 entitled “Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World”.

As was the case at UNGA 70 - the occasion for the first adoption of this resolution and of its annexed Declaration – and, as noted in the explanation of position which we gave at that time, New Zealand remains unable to vote in favour of this text.

We have no doubt whatsoever regarding the very strong support of the state which is the lead sponsor of L 46 for a nuclear weapon-free world. But it remains unclear to us how it is that the text of the Universal Declaration, and its follow-up resolution, will assist in getting us there.

Accordingly, New Zealand has abstained on the vote on L 46.

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L.22 Rev.1 - Convening a Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Turning now to L.22 Rev.1 entitled “Convening a Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction” on which we have abstained.

New Zealand understands the frustration of states in the Middle East regarding the failure to make decisive progress on a Middle East Zone free of WMD and which was such a key part of the agreement in 1995 to extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty beyond its expiry date.

We strongly welcomed the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference with its promise of forward movement via the convening of a conference in 2012 and continue to deeply regret that, notwithstanding intensive efforts, this has not yet taken place.

We strongly urge all relevant parties to work together to arrive at a feasible and durable approach which offers the real prospect of a WMD-free Middle East applicable to all States in the region.