



Statement by

H.E. Nicole Robertson
Permanent Representative, Vienna

at the

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the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Cluster II

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Mr Chair

As a long-standing and committed advocate of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, New Zealand was disappointed that the NPT membership was unable in 2015 to set an ambitious agenda to strengthen and implement this cornerstone Treaty over this five-year period. We do not, however, interpret this failure as signalling any reduction in States Parties' commitment to the Treaty and implementation across all pillars. Indeed, we approach this week's debate as an opportunity to, purposefully and constructively, restate our collective view that an effective global nuclear non-proliferation regime is fundamental to building a secure world.

I would like to make five main points today, focusing primarily on the critical role of the NPT's safeguards system. Firstly, New Zealand wishes to underscore that the NPT safeguards system, with its core objectives of transparency and accountability, is vital for the global non-proliferation regime. The integrity of the International Atomic Energy Agency's verification activities is fundamental to the assurances New Zealand seeks that nuclear activities undertaken by states are solely for peaceful purposes.

We have seen some significant progress in the resolution of safeguards issues over the last few years, notably the agreement with Iran of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). New Zealand views the JCPOA as a truly critical agreement, reminding us that even seemingly intractable issues can be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue. We all have a stake in the faithful implementation, and success, of the JCPOA and so we are pleased to announce that New Zealand will contribute another NZD150,000 towards the IAEA's monitoring and verification activities in Iran.

Secondly, in contrast, we have also observed serious proliferation challenges. New Zealand is dismayed at the DPRK's nuclear tests, in blatant defiance of the international community, as well as IAEA Board and UN Security Council Resolutions. New Zealand calls on DPRK to abandon its nuclear and missile programmes and to re-engage in dialogue to achieve the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Thirdly, New Zealand believes it is important to continue to strengthen the application of safeguards and encourage other states to do the same.

In particular, New Zealand believes that an Additional Protocol should always feature as a condition of new supply arrangements for nuclear and associated material. We are pleased with the increasing number of states signing onto the Additional Protocol. We encourage all countries that have not yet done so – particularly those with significant nuclear activities – to conclude and bring into force an Additional Protocol without delay.

Fourthly, New Zealand recognises the important contribution to nuclear non-proliferation of effective export controls. New Zealand welcomes – and contributes to – the valuable role that the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Zangger Committee play in supporting the fundamental non-proliferation objectives of the NPT, to which we are all committed. It is NZ's view that the NPT is the cornerstone of these export control regimes and this guides our participation in these groups.

Fifthly, New Zealand has for more than 30 years advocated for Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and the role they play in promoting and safeguarding regional and international peace and stability, supporting global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, and reinforcing the NPT itself.

New Zealand is proud to stand with 60% of the world's states covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones, including all states of the Southern Hemisphere. This is a powerful demonstration of the collective will that can exist at a regional level to rid the world of nuclear weapons. We look forward to increasing cooperation among existing zones and to the creation of further zones.

In this regard, we again reaffirm our strong support for the initiative to establish a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. Only by doing so can the path be laid for an agreement which lives up to the expectations of 1995.

Mr Chair

In closing, New Zealand's commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation is deep and enduring, stemming from our strong belief that nuclear weapons do not make the world a safer place. New Zealand strongly believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are inextricably linked and that action on both fronts is essential for the realisation of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you Mr Chair.