



**Statement by H.E. Dell Higgle  
Ambassador for Disarmament**

**UN Conference to Negotiate a  
Nuclear Prohibition Treaty**

**15 June 2017**

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Madam President,

Since we all met here in March, you and your team have been assiduous in carrying forward the preparations to lay the ground work for a productive and successful outcome to the negotiation, in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 71/258, of a legally-binding prohibition on nuclear weapons, leading toward their total elimination. The New Zealand Delegation is very grateful for your efforts and, in particular, for the draft convention set out in A/CONF.229/2017/CRP.1. As you observed during your recent consultations, Madam President, this first draft is intended as a *starting point* for our negotiations. We believe you have given us all an excellent foundation on which, now, to build our final text.

My Delegation will be conveying its more detailed views on the draft put forward in CRP.1 over coming days in accordance with the schedule you have outlined for us. For today, I would like to make some general observations on the text from the vantage point of the fundamental objectives for this negotiation which I believe all of us here share.

In moving forward now to put in place the architecture essential for nuclear disarmament, we must ensure that our treaty provides a firm basis for implementation of *all* the provisions - both disarmament and non-proliferation - of the Nuclear Weapon Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We must not permit any diminution of the non-proliferation gains secured over the nigh-on 50 years of that Treaty.

No barrier should be incorporated into the new legal instrument which might work against its potential universality and against, therefore, the ultimate achievement of our aspirations for a nuclear weapon-free world. To that end, the basis for adherence at any point in particular by States currently possessing nuclear weapons must be clear and feasible in terms of process and procedure.

Viewing the text against these reference points, Madam President, we believe you have indeed been successful in building strongly on the foundations of the NPT. The set of prohibitions contained in Article 1 gives us an excellent basis to carry forward our work. That said, we would hope that it will prove possible to make better use of the successes of the NPT's system of safeguards by providing a stronger framework under Article 3 to ensure compliance with the core prohibitions of Article 1. We also wonder whether the bifurcation in Article 1 (as between paragraph 1 and paragraph 2) is in fact necessary and whether it might not be preferable to combine the two paragraphs – which in some respects are duplicative – into one set of obligations.

We would welcome a better understanding of the advantages in providing, under Articles 4 and 5 of the draft convention, for two separate pathways for adherence by nuclear weapon possessors. In our view, the process envisaged in Article 5 of a stand-alone additional protocol to govern the terms and conditions, including verification, for adherence by any nuclear weapon possessor is likely to offer the most viable route. But clearly there is a need to incorporate into the text of the convention a much greater level of detail about the process and procedure for putting such protocols in place in order to provide clear reassurance to all States about the substantive requirements and the procedures for this pathway.

Finally, Madam President, I note that there is much we like and welcome in the draft preamble you have given us but we do think that there is room for an additional level of detail in it – most notably in spelling out the current rules of International Humanitarian Law which have been such an important motivating factor for all of us here in terms both of the adoption of UNGA Resolution 71/258 and also of the various processes, including the Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons, that preceded it. We will

be making some drafting suggestions on this aspect of the preamble as well as on a number of other paragraphs in order to record more fully the motivation underlying the negotiation of this draft Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Thank you.