



iCAN Aotearoa New Zealand
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Hon Murray McCully,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Parliament, Wellington

6 August 2015

Dear Minister,

On the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima - a time when the global community is particularly focussed on the horrific consequences of nuclear warfare and the urgent need to ensure it never happens again - I am writing to you once more on behalf of iCAN Aotearoa New Zealand to urge New Zealand to endorse the Humanitarian Pledge.

As you will be aware, the Humanitarian Pledge is a very significant initiative arising out of the Third International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, hosted last December by Austria, and calls on all state parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT): *"to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under Article VI, and to this end, to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons"*, and to *"pledge to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal"*.

Since the 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to achieve progress towards implementation of those Article VI obligations, support for the Humanitarian Pledge has accelerated as a means by which states can make a clear public commitment to working to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Humanitarian Pledge does not specify what form of legally binding instrument is needed to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, rather it is a statement of commitment to act on the Article VI obligation on all state parties to the NPT: *"to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament"*.

According to the Austrian Foreign Ministry¹, 113 states have now formally expressed support for the Humanitarian Pledge, including the majority of state parties to the NPT and all of the states involved in the New Agenda Coalition, with the notable and regrettable exception of New Zealand.

New Zealand's failure - thus far - to formally express support for the Humanitarian Pledge is inconsistent with its recent statements in international fora, for example:

"It is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances. The catastrophic effects of a nuclear weapon detonation,

whether by accident, miscalculation or design, cannot be adequately addressed. All efforts must be exerted to eliminate the threat of these weapons of mass destruction. The only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination.”²

It can further be seen as inconsistent with the reminder in the Working Paper submitted by New Zealand to the NPT Review Conference, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, that: *“the obligation to pursue effective measures towards nuclear disarmament is one that applies equally to all States parties to the Treaty and not just the nuclear-weapon States”*; and the statement that:

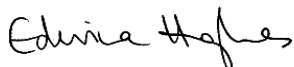
“Members of the New Agenda Coalition believe that it is high time to elaborate the “effective measures” relating to nuclear disarmament which are required by article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to heed the calls for urgency made by previous Review Conferences and the General Assembly, among others.”³

The Humanitarian Pledge has become a key indicator of the level of commitment of each state to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, as well as a measure of their commitment to honouring their disarmament obligations under the NPT, and elsewhere.

We therefore seek your assurance that New Zealand will join the other New Agenda Coalition states, and the majority of state parties to the NPT, and convey its formal support for the Humanitarian Pledge to the Austrian government without any further delay.

We look forward to your earliest response.

Yours sincerely,



Edwina Hughes,
Coordinator, iCAN Aotearoa New Zealand

CC: Rt Hon John Key, Prime Minister
Hon Phil Goff, Spokesperson on Disarmament, Labour Party
Dr Kennedy Graham, Disarmament and Arms Control Spokesperson, Green Party
Rt Hon Winston Peters, Leader, New Zealand First
Hon Te Ururoa Flavell and Marama Fox, Co-Leaders, Maori Party
Hon Peter Dunne, Leader, United Future
David Seymour, Leader, ACT Party
Mark Mitchell, Chairperson, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee

¹ Formal Endorsements and/or expressions of support for the Humanitarian Pledge, http://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Abruestung/HINW14/HINW14vienna_update_pledge_support.pdf

² Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons: 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, delivered by H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Austria, on behalf of 159 states, including New Zealand, 28 April 2015

³ Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Working Paper submitted by New Zealand on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa), 9 March 2015 (NPT/CONF.2015/WP.9)