



Statement by

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to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

at the

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of Nuclear Weapons

Cluster One

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Mr Chair

Please accept my warmest congratulations on your appointment and to assure you of the full support of the New Zealand Delegation. My Delegation, of course, strongly supports the statements already delivered by the NAC and the De-alerting Group as well as the Statement delivered earlier this morning by Austria introducing WP 30 on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr Chair, you, like us, will have heard during last week's General Debate the repeated observation that the NPT is now at a turning point. We all heard, as well, many references to the diminishing credibility of the Treaty's Grand Bargain.

No one here can be ignorant of why this is so – many, many voices spoke last week to emphasise the insufficiency of progress on nuclear disarmament – on Article VI. No doubt we will hear much more detail on this in the coming weeks as we, in this Committee, review the progress that has been made since the last Review Conference in implementing the Action Plan – its 22 action steps relating to nuclear disarmament – which was agreed at our 2010 meeting. We expect, of course, to hear, too, expressions of gratitude for what *has* been done in recent years in terms of reductions in the overall numbers of nuclear weapons.

All of us here - as supporters of our regime - will want, above all, not to imperil our Treaty. The NPT has delivered significant benefit to us all - especially in terms of constraining horizontal nuclear proliferation – and we must preserve its viability and its integrity.

When faced with a turning point, one thing should be very clear, Mr Chair. One never survives a turning point by doing nothing, by preserving what *has been* the status quo. It is doing nothing which *will* imperil our regime.

It will be the responsibility of us all, as we meet in this Committee's Subsidiary Body, to chart the course - the pathway - for our future work to reinforce the standing and bona fides of our Treaty. For New Zealand - and our fellow members of the New Agenda Coalition - the way through the turning point in our Treaty's credibility is very clear.

We look back at the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference: it records that the Conference affirmed that "all States need to make special efforts to establish the *necessary framework* to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons" (emphasis added). Such a framework, Mr Chair, *necessarily* will need to involve legally-effective measures: measures that, under international law, set the rules and the prohibitions to be followed by us all if we are to achieve a nuclear weapon-free world. Anything less would be just another political declaration - not something legally-binding – and not, therefore, a truly "effective measure" for nuclear disarmament.



Opinions have differed regarding the point at which it is necessary to *start* the conversation regarding legally-effective measures. Opinions differ about whether legally-effective measures are best tackled piecemeal or comprehensively. But there can – or should not be – any question about whether a legally-binding instrument *is* needed to achieve the promise of nuclear disarmament in Article VI.

At this turning-point in the life-span of our Treaty, it is time to reframe and widen the key issues under discussion here. It is time now to focus on specific proposals to elaborate the legally-effective measures required to achieve comprehensively, and to maintain, a world without nuclear weapons.

In WP 9, the NAC has put forward two legally distinct approaches capable of implementing Article VI: the negotiation of a stand-alone agreement, or of a series - or framework - of agreements. Either of these two pathways would advance implementation of Article VI and would certainly be fully compatible with the object and purpose of the Treaty.

New Zealand looks forward to an exploration in this Committee's Subsidiary Body of the legal approaches capable of advancing "effective measures". We do so with added urgency given the compelling and unassailable evidence that has emerged over the last several years regarding the risks, and catastrophic humanitarian impact of, any nuclear weapon detonation. This evidence highlights the urgent need for the full implementation of obligations and undertakings under the NPT and its Review Conferences - and in particular of the full implementation of Article VI.

Accordingly, we look to this Review Conference to take decisions to advance "effective measures" and to follow this up in all disarmament forums, as well as in the General Assembly. We must now move forward on the legally-effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament which will move us through this turning point and preserve our Treaty and its Grand Bargain.

Thank you Mr Chair.

