



Statement by

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On behalf of the New Agenda Coalition

at the

2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the  
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

General Debate

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Madam President,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC): Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa and my own country New Zealand. At the outset, the NAC wishes to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We assure you of the full support and cooperation of the NAC during your term.

In founding the NAC in 1998 the Foreign Ministers of our countries were motivated by the continued threat to humanity represented by the perspective of indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapon States and the nuclear weapon-capable States outside the NPT, and the attendant possibility of use or threat of use of those weapons. The threat posed by nuclear weapons continues to drive the NAC to champion the cause of nuclear disarmament, knowing of course that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to avoid a nuclear weapon detonation and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would follow.

As ever the NAC remains committed to the NPT and to its grand bargain between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation obligations and the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Today, however, while the non-proliferation pillar of the Treaty has worked well in limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and the non-proliferation provisions and obligations under the Treaty have been strengthened, the commitments embodied in the disarmament pillar of the NPT remain unfulfilled.

It is possible to identify some positive developments since the 2010 Review Conference. We count among these the continuing implementation of the New Start Treaty between Russia and the US – one of the 13 practical steps agreed by all States parties to the NPT in 2000 for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the Treaty – and the signature by all five nuclear weapon States of the protocol to the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. We also acknowledge the very recent launch by the United States of an International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which could give substance to the 13<sup>th</sup> of the practical steps just mentioned.

While welcome, these developments fall far short of the obligations contained in Article VI, and have not brought us closer to negotiations in good faith on effective measures for nuclear disarmament.

Nor do they signal fulfilment of Action 5 on nuclear disarmament in the 2010 Action Plan, implementation of which is, at best, underwhelming. The NAC does not subscribe to the view put forward by some that the 2010 Action Plan is “a roadmap for long-term action”, particularly if that is intended to imply that its implementation will not be completed, or in the case of some actions, even commenced, in the near term. In light of the 45-year record of non-implementation of Article VI of the NPT, the failure over almost two decades to execute the steps agreed in 1995 and 2000 to advance Article VI, and the

lack of progress following the unequivocal undertaking made by the nuclear weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, the NAC cannot accept the same pattern of inaction with respect to the commitments made in 2010, or to those we expect will be made here.

Madam President,

The NAC regrets that, in 2015, we continue to face reluctance by the nuclear weapon States to fulfil their legal obligations, undertakings and commitments with respect to nuclear disarmament. This reluctance is obvious in attempts to defend the modernisation of nuclear arsenals and to praise the purported effectiveness of nuclear deterrence – not, in some cases, in spite of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons but because of them. It is also manifested in the entrenchment, for the indefinite future, of nuclear weapons in the military budgets and security doctrines of the nuclear weapon States and their regional alliance partners. The NAC wonders at what point it is no longer credible to overlook the failure to initiate the multilateral process necessary to implement this core provision of the Treaty – something indeed referenced by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion, now virtually 20 years ago.

Madam President,

The international community's understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation has increased exponentially since the last NPT Review Conference in 2010 with a number of key findings emerging from the evidence presented at three conferences in Norway, Mexico and Austria.

This evidence has highlighted that increasing urban populations and the greater destructive power of nuclear weapons have amplified the potential health and environmental effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, would be felt across borders and generations, and disproportionately by women and children. It has confirmed that neither States nor international agencies have adequate capabilities to respond. And, as if we needed yet another prompt to action, it has made clear that the risks of an accident, human error or system failure involving nuclear weapons are continuing, greater than previously suspected and increasing.

In light of this increased understanding States parties bear significantly heightened responsibility to ensure that this Review Conference actively pursues the nuclear disarmament objectives of Article VI. The NAC cannot but agree with the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, in his assertion that “[t]he catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and current trends are too serious to ignore. The prohibition and elimination of these weapons through a legally binding agreement is the only guarantee that they will never be used again.”

Madam President,

The NAC shares also the ICRC's belief that States parties should make this NPT Review Conference a turning point for decision-making and progress in nuclear disarmament. In Working Paper 9 we call for this Conference to explore the legal approaches available to advance the "effective measures" relating to nuclear disarmament as required by Article VI. We also call for decisions to advance "effective measures" and for appropriate follow-up actions in all disarmament fora as well as in the United Nations General Assembly.

Madam President,

Pending the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the NAC also considers that more must be done to reduce the risks of nuclear weapon detonations, whether intentional or accidental. The NAC urges reductions in the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems and in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. The NAC also encourages an increase in transparency, including through more regular and detailed reporting, to improve the international community's ability to monitor the implementation of disarmament commitments.

The NAC continues to believe that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, nuclear weapon free zones make a valuable contribution to enhancing global and regional peace and security. We are pleased that the majority of the world's States are parties to such zones and thank Indonesia for its initiative in convening on 24 April the Third Conference of States Parties to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia. We continue to emphasise the importance of the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones in areas where they do not exist, particularly in the Middle East, as well as of the strengthening of the existing ones. In this sense, we urge the nuclear weapons States to withdraw any reservations or interpretative declarations to the relevant protocols to treaties establishing nuclear-weapons-free zones, which run counter to those treaties' objectives.

In this context, we note all efforts aimed at advancing the goal of establishing a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Though it is an integral element of the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the Resolution on the Middle East remains unfulfilled. This remains a matter of serious concern to the NAC.

The NAC affirms the vital importance of the universality of the NPT and urges India, Israel and Pakistan to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States promptly and without conditions. We are also looking forward to the accession of South Sudan as early as possible. Furthermore, the NAC urges the DPRK to verifiably dismantle any nuclear weapons, to return to the NPT without delay and to place all its facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency verification.

Madam President,

We can no longer afford a selective approach to the implementation of the NPT's provisions – this is something that weakens the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime, reinforces inequalities under the Treaty and undermines its credibility. States parties must accelerate implementation of all agreements and undertakings made at successive NPT Review Conferences.

The NAC urges all States parties to seize the opportunity of this Review Conference to begin work in earnest on the construction of a comprehensive legally-binding mechanism for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, whether that is pursued through the negotiation of a standalone agreement or a framework of mutually supportive instruments. This should include clearly defined benchmarks and timelines, and be backed by a strong system of verification.

Please be assured, Madam President, that the NAC will continue to be constructive throughout the 2015 NPT Review Conference in our quest to strengthen the implementation of the NPT through accelerated actions. On behalf of the NAC allow me once again to reiterate our support to you and your team. We stand ready to fully and effectively engage with all States parties to ensure the success of this Review Conference.

Thank you.