Statement by

New Zealand

at the

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

Main Committee III

New York, May 2015

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Mr Chairman

New Zealand and New Zealanders contribute to and benefit from advances in nuclear science across fields as diverse as human health, water management and food quality. While we have decided not to include nuclear power in our own energy mix, we nevertheless recognise the right of State Parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under Article IV of the Treaty. New Zealand is equally firm in its view that all countries developing and using nuclear energy must apply the highest standards of safeguards, safety and security through all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle, including transport and waste management.

The IAEA’s Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI) has a key role to play in facilitating the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. New Zealand has been pleased to support PUI projects monitoring radioactivity in the marine environment from the Fukushima accident and responding to sustained drought in the Sahel region. We were also pleased to host last year the annual meeting of the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) for Research, Development and Training in Nuclear Science and Technology for the Asia-Pacific region which promotes and coordinates cooperative research, development and training projects in nuclear science and technology.

Mr Chairman,

It is now more than four years since the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident which has provided the impetus for a renewed international focus on nuclear safety. New Zealand commends and fully supports the on-going efforts of the IAEA to coordinate and share lessons learned from Fukushima. For New Zealand, and many of our regional neighbours, the accident reinforced the importance of continued vigilance and transparency on nuclear safety issues. It also clearly demonstrated that nuclear accidents do not respect national boundaries. And this is particularly true for an accident occurring during the maritime transport of nuclear material.

New Zealand continues to actively promote the safe transport of radioactive material, at the IAEA and other relevant forums. It is essential that the highest possible safety standards are adopted and applied by those transporting radioactive material, and that coastal and other interested States receive notification in advance of shipments. In September 2013 New Zealand was pleased to join a number of coastal and shipping states at the IAEA in agreeing voluntary best practice guidelines on communication to apply to certain shipments of radioactive material. We look forward to their implementation and to participating in a table-top exercise to test the guidelines, to take place in Vienna next month. We also welcome efforts to improve the international
nuclear liability regime and will continue to work with others to ensure the concerns of non-nuclear coastal states are taken into account.

Mr Chairman,

New Zealand remains actively engaged in international efforts to strengthen nuclear security, including through participation in the Nuclear Security Summits and through our funding of the IAEA’s Nuclear Security Fund. New Zealand considers the Agency’s work on nuclear security as vital. We have contributed regularly to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund, most recently NZ$100,000 earlier this year, and we look forward to participating in the Nuclear Security Conference in December 2016.

New Zealand is also a strong supporter of a range of other international initiatives designed to strengthen the global nuclear security framework. We are regular contributors to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, to which we have donated more than $7 million over the last decade. Later this year, we look forward to hosting a regional table top exercise under the auspices of the Proliferation Security Initiative to strengthen efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials.

Mr Chairman,

New Zealand remains committed to efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education. In New Zealand, funding is available through the Peace and Disarmament Education Trust for postgraduate research aimed at promoting international peace, arms control and disarmament. The Disarmament Education United Nations Implementation Fund supports the work of New Zealanders in promoting progress towards disarmament and non-proliferation, including in relation to nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairman,

New Zealand regrets that progress on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy has not been matched by progress on nuclear disarmament. This lack of progress on disarmament undermines the mutually-reinforcing nature of the three pillars and challenges the integrity and authority of the NPT. We can and must do better.

Thank you Mr Chairman