

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS



**Te Māngai o Aotearoa**

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**UNGA 62: FIRST COMMITTEE**

**GENERAL DEBATE**

**STATEMENT BY  
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AMBASSADOR FOR DISARMAMENT**

**10 October 2007**

Mr Chairman

We are very pleased to see you in the Chair of First Committee. You can be assured of my delegation's full support as you lead us through the Committee's comprehensive work programme.

2007 has been a year of fluctuations. We have made headway in some areas, while coming tantalisingly close to progress in others. However, we clearly still have some work to do in order to fully reinvigorate the international disarmament agenda and gain substantive returns.

For many of us, a key focus in 2007 was the effort to find a pathway for the Conference on Disarmament to recommence negotiations. The Six Presidents are to be congratulated for their tireless efforts, and for the skill and delicacy with which the P6 Proposal has been crafted to accommodate States' concerns. We agree with the Secretary General's assessment that to move forward on the basis of the P6 Proposal "would have a positive impact on the international security atmosphere" and "would demonstrate to the international community at large that the security challenges before us are not overwhelming, but can be addressed collectively".

Considerable momentum has been created within the CD, but it has not yet proved sufficient to break through the decade-long stalemate in which we continue to languish. However, through delegations' engagement in the comprehensive schedule of activities during 2007, we have had the opportunity to glimpse the CD's potential to truly engage on international security issues and make a measurable difference to the international community. This engagement should have given us all a keener sense of what is at stake, should the CD continue to fail in taking its work forward. We urge all delegations in the CD to heed the Secretary General's call and exercise maximum flexibility in their efforts to commence substantive negotiations as early as possible in 2008.

Creating a world safe from nuclear weapons remains one of the international community's most urgent priorities. My delegation has already registered its views on the imperative for implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments through the statement of the New Agenda Coalition, delivered by Ambassador de Alba of Mexico at the beginning of this General Debate. It is clear that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty requires a sense of renewed ownership and energy from all of its States Parties in support of its full implementation. We need to look for positive outcomes across the Treaty's remit to ensure that the constructive start to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's review process, commenced in Vienna last April, will proceed to the achievement of concrete measurable progress at the next review conference in 2010.

With this in mind, New Zealand will work with Chile, Nigeria, Sweden and Switzerland to introduce a resolution at this year's First Committee on lowering

the operational status of nuclear weapons systems. This initiative builds upon the increased engagement evident on the issue of de-alerting from a broad range of States at both the NPT Preparatory Committee and during the CD's discussions on nuclear disarmament. I will expand further on the details of this resolution in the nuclear disarmament segment of our work.

We commend the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and its Director General Mohamed El Baradei, in verifying that nuclear energy programmes are for peaceful uses. But the Agency must have all of the necessary tools available to it to fulfil this mandate. In this context it remains New Zealand's view that the Additional Protocol is the contemporary verification standard, and, as such, should logically be a condition of nuclear supply. We urge those states that have not yet concluded Additional Protocols with the Agency to do so without delay.

We are encouraged by the increased level of engagement between Iran and the IAEA in recent weeks as both parties engage to address long outstanding questions relating to Iran's past nuclear programme. We hope that this dialogue will result in tangible progress being made.

But, along with other members of the international community, New Zealand continues to be concerned about the questions that remain regarding Iran's nuclear programme. Iran's failure to comply fully with the provisions of UN Security Council and IAEA resolutions is disappointing. We continue to call on Iran to comply with these resolutions as a matter of priority. New Zealand's strong preference is for a peaceful, negotiated solution to this matter and we call on Iran to do its part to realise this outcome.

Like many in the international community, New Zealand was deeply concerned at the DPRK's decision in October last year to undertake a nuclear test. We joined calls for the DPRK to immediately cease further action and to return to the Six Party Talks without preconditions.

New Zealand is pleased with the recent progress that has been achieved in the Six Party plenary and Working Group process. We believe that committed dialogue, with all parties working constructively to bring about a positive resolution, provides the best possibility for achieving a peaceful and comprehensive resolution on the Korean Peninsula. It is our hope that progress attained over recent months will be the first steps in the DPRK returning to full compliance with its international obligations. A successful settlement of this longstanding issue would be a significant accomplishment for international peace and security.

11 years have passed since the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was opened for adoption in 1996. As New Zealand stressed at the Article XIV Conference in September this year, it is imperative that this treaty enters into force. New Zealand remains fully committed to encouraging the universalisation of the

CTBT. In particular we urge those Annex 2 States that have signed but not ratified, to make the ultimate expression of support for the Treaty by ratifying it without delay.

New Zealand strongly supports the G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Through the G8 Global Partnership, we contributed this year to a US-led project to combat smuggling of nuclear and radioactive materials on the Russia/Ukraine border. This is another tangible example of New Zealand's commitment to improving international security.

Our work on other weapons of mass destruction is progressing well. The successful Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference in November gave States the opportunity to agree on practical strategies for improving national implementation, confidence building measures, biosecurity and implementation support through agreement on a structured intersessional programme and action plans. We were particularly pleased to see the formal establishment of an Implementation Support Unit with the endorsement of all States Parties.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention's entry into force. This Convention retains an important position within the disarmament framework and, with 182 states parties, enjoys almost universal support. We continue to emphasise that all chemical weapons stockpiles be destroyed by 2012, the deadline in the Convention. We are also looking forward to the Review Conference in 2008, which will give states the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the Convention as well as to develop practical steps to ensure the Convention's implementation is relevant in the contemporary environment.

2007 has also seen some useful progress on the conventional weapons front. This year we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Over the last decade, the gains made under this Convention in terms of clearing mined areas, destroying stockpiles, and assisting victims have been enormous and have qualitatively improved the lives of many civilians living in environments affected by conflict. States will need to work together in the lead up to the second Review Conference to ensure that the full implementation of the Convention is achieved. In particular, this will require close collaboration to assist those States experiencing challenges in working towards the completion of their mine clearance deadlines. New Zealand is committed to supporting the work of the Convention and will serve as co-chair for victim assistance issues during 2008.

The launching of a dedicated international process on cluster munitions has been one of the standout achievements of this year. The Oslo Declaration in February set out specific, measurable and time-bound parameters to achieve a new convention by the end of 2008 which will address the humanitarian impact

caused by cluster munitions. New Zealand has long advocated for the need to seriously address concerns relating to the use and design of cluster munitions, and is pleased to be part of the core group leading this effort. As part of the process towards the conclusion of a new international instrument, New Zealand will host a meeting of the Oslo Process in Wellington next February.

We hope that progress on cluster munitions will also be possible within the CCW framework. We have been pleased to see a greatly increased level of engagement by CCW States over the past year on the issue of cluster munitions. There now seems to be universal recognition that cluster munitions pose a specific humanitarian risk, and that serious consideration must be given to ways to respond to that risk. We welcome all efforts towards an outcome which addresses the harm that cluster munitions cause to civilians.

Staying on the theme of the CCW, New Zealand deposited its instrument of acceptance to the CCW's Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War at the UN treaty event last week. Our acceptance of this important Protocol underlines New Zealand's commitment to ending the post-conflict death, injury and suffering that result from the wide range of unexploded and abandoned ordnance that remain after hostilities have ended.

This year we have also welcomed the initiative of the Canadian and Swiss governments to sponsor an informal meeting on transfers of small arms and light weapons. It enabled a thorough discussion of national and regional level measures that have been put in place to control trade in small arms and light weapons. Many highlighted the pervasive negative downstream effects of illicit SALW transfers – socio-economic breakdowns, human rights and humanitarian abuses, prolonged or intensified conflicts and dysfunctional governance. Risks to the sustainable development of developing countries are now widely recognized as one of the serious consequences of irresponsible trade in guns. We look forward to taking up this issue again at next year's Biennial Meeting of States.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman,

We have come some way in 2007, but we still have much to achieve. The early commencement of substantive negotiations in the CD would provide a much-needed opportunity to demonstrate collective leadership and achieve meaningful gains on disarmament and non-proliferation. Renewed ownership and engagement in pursuit of positive outcomes from the NPT review cycle would allow us to achieve some concrete progress by 2010. The conclusion of a new international instrument on cluster munitions would qualitatively improve the protection of civilians in conflict situations. New Zealand is committed to playing its part in these processes.