

MIDDLE POWERS INITIATIVE

ARTICLE VI FORUM

VIENNA 29-30 MARCH 2007-04-04

STATEMENT BY CAROLINE MCDONALD

Mr Chairman

It is an honour to invited to speak at this gathering of the Article VI Forum. Congratulations to the MPI for this initiative and thanks to our hosts the IAEA and Government of Austria.

I have listened with interest and learnt a great deal from the previous speakers - particularly the well informed and interesting contributions by academics and non-governments think tanks.

New Zealand has been represented at all four Article VI Forums and this coupled with being last to speak on this panel and coming late in the conference, means I run a risk of repetition - I value reinforcement of messages but we also need to move the dialogue forward.

I have been asked to speak on nuclear disarmament - what can non nuclear weapon states do?

A world free of nuclear weapons is a key focus for the New Zealand government, an aim we all share.

New Zealand has long attached the highest priority to nuclear disarmament; a commitment strengthened by the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945 - and the tests carried out by nuclear weapon states in the Pacific.

We hold the firm view that nuclear weapons do not contribute to international security.

On the contrary the continued role of nuclear weapons as part of military doctrines presents a clear and present danger to individual, regional and global security.

The possibility that non nuclear weapon states might seek to develop nuclear weapons is a very serious concern; as are those countries that remain outside the NPT. The rise of terrorism, and the risk of nuclear materials and weapons being used by terrorists is a new but very real issue.

What role can non-nuclear weapon states take in addressing these issues? New Zealand's response has been to take a consistent and even handed approach and to contribute to responses to both vertical and horizontal proliferation.

New Zealand has consistently opposed the acquisition, testing, or retention of nuclear weapons by any country: nuclear weapons state or non nuclear weapon state; by those within and outside the NPT. We oppose nuclear weapons in any hands.

Other speakers have pointed to the disappointing lack of outcome from the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the lack of reference to disarmament and non-proliferation in the UN High Level Summit outcome document, the DPRK's decision to test a nuclear device in 2006, and ongoing questions over Iran's nuclear programme.

The nuclear disarmament and non proliferation agenda is fraught with challenges and progressing nuclear disarmament in the short term will not be easy.

Nuclear disarmament is not a goal which can be achieved over night. But there are measures that can be taken which merit immediate attention.

While many of these measures require nuclear weapon states take up, for example removal of nuclear weapons from hair trigger alert, there are actions that non nuclear weapon states can take to contribute to a nuclear weapon free world.

Here are my top ten actions.

First and foremost it is important to actively **support the Nuclear Non Proliferation treaty**. The NPT is the cornerstone of the multilateral nuclear disarmament and non proliferation treaty regime.

It is an unequal bargain. But it is virtually universal and contains the only current undertaking by nuclear weapon states to disarm their nuclear arsenals.

It is in no-one's interests to see it talked down or weakened in any way. There is a temptation for those of us keen to move forward on nuclear disarmament to look for easier options.

My view is that now is not the time to search for alternatives

We may wish to see some form of nuclear weapons convention adopted in the future. But we are concerned that the current climate would not produce the sort of outcome that all we proponents of nuclear disarmament want.

New Zealand's focus is to work within the NPT to make progress towards our objective of the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

The second on my list of important actions is to **strengthen the NPT**.

New Zealand contributes to activities on both disarmament and non-proliferation. As other speakers have said these are two sides of the same coin.

As the former UN Secretary General said in his address at Princeton University last year efforts are needed to achieve both disarmament and non-proliferation. If the supporters of each side wait for the other to move first, the result is that mutually assured destruction has been replaced by mutually assured paralysis.

New Zealand works with New Agenda Coalition countries to strengthen the disarmament leg of the NPT. This includes holding nuclear weapon states to the undertakings agreed at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, and to the 13 practical steps to implement Article VI of the NPT agreed at the 2000 review Conference.

New Zealand also works with a group of 10 countries in Vienna - all non nuclear weapons states - on safeguards, security, and peaceful uses issues.

A key objective is to strengthen the NPT's non proliferation pillar by encouraging all non nuclear weapons states to conclude comprehensive safeguards and sign an Additional Protocol with the IAEA. Meeting non proliferation obligations is a serious undertaking as IAEA Board and Security Council reaction to Iran demonstrates.

The third important action is to **work with others to amplify our voice**. The New Agenda Coalition is a cross regional group with a focus on nuclear disarmament. It provides a vehicle to get past traditional entrenched positions and work for consensus on priority disarmament issues.

Other groups may have similar objectives. We have, for example, watched with interest the Norwegian led Initiative. Non nuclear weapon states might consider opportunities to work flexibly with non traditional partners to achieve our goals.

The fourth important action is that to move nuclear disarmament forward requires **non nuclear weapons states to engage with nuclear weapon states** I was pleased to see this on the agenda of your last meeting. Perhaps a dialogue between us at venues such as this MPI meeting could prove fruitful.

The fifth important action non nuclear weapon states can take is to work for **universalisation of the NPT**. This has proved difficult, and I would welcome any new ideas other non nuclear weapon states have to share on how to achieve this.

My sixth point is that all states, including non nuclear weapon states who have yet to do so, should **sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty** - the CTBT.

This objective is all the more important in light of the announcement in October 2006 by the DPRK that it had undertaken a nuclear test. We saw this as a very real threat to the security of our Asia Pacific region. We unequivocally condemned Pyongyang's actions. The path to security and progress does not lie through the possession of nuclear weapons.

Although it has not yet entered into force, the CTBT has created a strong international norm against testing, guarding against the future development of weapons.

The entire global community stands to benefit from fully endorsing an international regime that has as its fundamental obligation the prohibition of nuclear weapons testing.

The entry into force of the CTBT would make a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament and non proliferation. While entry into force of the treaty is dependent on ratification by Annex II states, ratification by any state reinforces the treaty's objectives and the international norm against testing of nuclear weapons.

The seventh action non nuclear weapon states can take is to **become party to a nuclear weapons free zone**. By doing so countries are taking practical steps to implement the provisions of the NPT in a regional context and further strengthening the NPT regime overall.

By becoming party to a nuclear weapons free zone countries send a powerful message to the international community of their renunciation of nuclear weapons. The progress on these zones demonstrates that the majority of states world wide are determined to pursue a world that is free of nuclear weapons. This is an important message.

New Zealand is a member of the Rarotonga Treaty - setting up the South Pacific nuclear free zone. We are actively working with Brazil for a southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons. The Pelindaba treaty is the part of the jigsaw yet to be completed. Currently, ten more ratifications are needed for it to enter into force.

The eighth action is **a national one**. There is no one size fits all approach, and each country would need to assess its own situation and objectives, and make its own decisions.

In New Zealand's case the New Zealand Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Disarmament and Arms Control Act 1987 cemented New Zealand's nuclear free status. It also implemented, in New Zealand, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone treaty, the treaty of Rarotonga of 1985, and other disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

Our legislation expressly makes it an offence to aid, abet or procure any person to manufacture, acquire, possess or have control over any nuclear explosive device.

New Zealand passed this legislation because of our strong belief that nuclear weapons are both immoral and a threat to humanity. This year marks the 20th anniversary of New Zealand's nuclear free legislation. This legislation is as relevant in today's climate as it was 20 years ago.

New Zealand's nuclear weapon free status continues to enjoy strong bipartisan support among political parties and a high level of support amongst the New Zealand public.

Nine - non nuclear weapons states can **implement their obligations under UNSCR 1540**. As you all know, UNSCR 1540 calls on all states to 'promote dialogue and cooperation on non-proliferation so as to address posed by proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery.

It remains New Zealand's view that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. As such, progress to guard against the proliferation of nuclear weapons contributes to our efforts towards a nuclear weapons free world.

New Zealand is active in the Pacific helping small states to implement their obligations under UNSCR 1540.

The tenth and last point concerns **support to non government organisations involved in disarmament education**. In New Zealand government funding is available, allocated by the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control to support these activities.

Civil Society has a key role to play in achieving our goal of nuclear disarmament. New Zealand supports the continued involvement of Civil Society in nuclear disarmament processes.

Not only does Civil Society have a wealth of technical expertise to contribute, they have the ability to maintain pressure on governments, particularly nuclear weapons states, and hold them accountable.

Civil Society also has an important role in raising public awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons to global security and keeping nuclear disarmament to the forefront of the debate. NGOs provide a much needed reminder of our ultimate goal - a world free of nuclear weapons.

To conclude: The next review cycle of the NPT will commence with the first Preparatory Committee meeting in Vienna in April/May 2007. The work to be undertaken in this forum should contribute usefully to the next NPT Review Cycle.

If we are to make progress on nuclear disarmament it will be important that this review cycle gets off to a good start.

New Zealand will be working with all likeminded countries - including the new Agenda Coalition - for the strongest possible outcome on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We will continue to work constructively for a world free of the threat of nuclear weapons.

I know that you share our commitment, and I look to you all to make the necessary commitment to contribute to this important outcome.