IRELAND

STATEMENT

BY

IRELAND

ON BEHALF OF
THE NEW AGENDA COALITION
(BRAZIL, EGYPT, IRELAND, MEXICO,
NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH AFRICA AND SWEDEN)

DELIVERED BY MS. ALISON KELLY
DURING THE FIRST COMMITTEE
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Statement by New Agenda Coalition in the general debate

Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the seven members of the New Agenda Coalition: Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden and my own country, Ireland.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the office of Chairperson of the First Committee, and to assure you of the full support and cooperation of the New Agenda Coalition as you lead us in our work over the coming weeks.

The New Agenda Coalition is a group of non-nuclear-weapon States, from across the globe, which share a common goal of making the world free of nuclear weapons.

In advancing our shared objective of a nuclear-weapons-free world, the Coalition is fully committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing processes. Both therefore require continuous and irreversible progress. The only absolute guarantee against the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons is the complete and verifiable elimination of those weapons. For as long as a number of States deem that the possession of nuclear weapons is essential for their security, there may be others who will aspire to acquire them. We see no justification for the acquisition or the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons and we do not subscribe to the view that nuclear weapons – or the quest to develop them – contribute to international peace and security.

It was dissatisfaction at the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament in the aftermath of the NPT 1995 Review and Extension Conference that led to the establishment of the New Agenda Coalition in Dublin in 1998. The 2000 Review Conference agreed on 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament, yet during the decade that followed, little was done to implement them, and there were even attempts to call their validity into question.

We therefore welcome the renewed interest in nuclear disarmament seen in the past few years and the growing support for the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The NPT Review Conference in May adopted a comprehensive final document, which contains concrete recommendations for action under all three pillars, and on the Middle East. The document includes the specific reaffirmation of the continued validity of the 13 practical steps of 2000 and of the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The adoption of the final document and its inclusion of an action plan to build on the practical steps agreed in 2000 is both a reflection of this interest and support, and a positive sign for the future of the NPT. The expression by the Review Conference of deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear
weapons is a sobering reminder of the need to ensure their complete and irreversible elimination.

Given our experience of the past decade, it is essential that the various commitments given in the final document of the NPT Review Conference are implemented without delay. In addition to being progressive in their own right, they would also serve as confidence building measures. The New Agenda Coalition underlines the urgency of speedy implementation of the actions contained in the nuclear disarmament action plan. We will monitor implementation of these undertakings, and offer our support for all activities in that direction.

The Coalition underlines the continued importance of achieving universal adherence to the NPT, and urges the international community to strengthen its efforts in this regard. We call upon India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and to place their facilities under comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil the commitments under the Six-Party Talks, including those in the September 2005 joint statement, to completely and verifiably abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, and to return, at an early date, to the Treaty and to its adherence with its IAEA safeguards agreement. We reiterate our firm support for the Six-Party Talks and for the achievement of a resolution to the issues involved through diplomatic means.

Mr. Chairperson,

We regret that, despite promising indications in 2009, the efforts made by successive Presidents, and the calls addressed to it by this Assembly and the NPT States Parties at their Review Conference, the Conference on Disarmament has yet again concluded its annual session without engaging in substantive work. We thank the Secretary-General for his initiative to draw high-level political attention to the situation. We hope that the Conference will soon begin substantive work on all of its core issues.

We view positively the prospects for further key ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which have been greatly enhanced by the steps taken by Indonesia and the commitment made by the US to pursue ratification of the Treaty. While the ratification of all Annex 2 States is required for the Treaty to enter into force, we warmly welcome the recent ratifications by the Marshall Islands, the Central African Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago, which bring the total number of ratifications to 153. In this context the NAC reaffirms its opposition to nuclear weapons tests.

We welcome the conclusion and signature by the Russian Federation and the United States of America of a Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, and the commitment by both States, as reflected in the final document of the NPT Review Conference, to seek its early entry into force and full implementation. We hope that the ratification processes can be concluded as soon as possible. In this regard, we underline the need for all nuclear-weapon States to take concrete, transparent, verifiable and irreversible steps to eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, regardless of their location, including non-deployed and non-strategic nuclear weapons, in order to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.
The New Agenda Coalition welcomes all efforts towards transparency undertaken by some of the nuclear-weapon States, both before and during the 2010 NPT Review Conference, as well as the attention given to the subject of transparency in the final document of the Conference. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States will soon agree on a standard reporting form, as the Review Conference encouraged them to do, and look forward to hearing about steps taken by the Secretary-General, who was invited to establish a publicly available repository to include the information provided by the nuclear-weapon States.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens nuclear non-proliferation and contributes towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. Enhanced co-operation and consultation mechanisms among existing nuclear-weapon-free-zones can also make a significant contribution to the advancement of the international disarmament agenda. The second Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, held in New York on 30 April 2010, was an important event in this regard. We are pleased that the 2010 Review Conference, in its final document, encouraged the establishment of further nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the regions concerned. We hope that this encouragement will be followed by concerted international efforts to create nuclear-weapon-free zones in areas in the world where they do not currently exist, especially in the Middle East.

The New Agenda Coalition welcomes the agreement reached at the NPT Review Conference on conclusions and recommendations regarding the Middle East, particularly a process leading to full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and on practical steps to be taken in that regard. We call on the UN Secretary-General and on the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution to undertake all necessary preparations to implement what was agreed upon in the final document of the NPT Review Conference, including the convening of a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and encouragement of the nuclear-weapon States.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson,

The New Agenda Coalition welcomes the renewed global attention to the need for progress towards a nuclear weapon free world. The leadership shown by key players and the outcome of the NPT Review Conference lend important momentum to our efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons, but we all have a responsibility to ensure that this momentum is converted into real progress, and that promises are translated into reality. The NAC is committed to playing its part in this common endeavour.

As in previous years, the Coalition will present a draft resolution to this Committee. The draft reflects our view of where the world stands at the moment regarding nuclear disarmament. We will be happy to discuss the text of the resolution with any Member State wishing to do so. We hope that, in line with the broader trends in international
affairs in the area of nuclear disarmament, the growth which has been seen in recent years in support for our resolution will be continued this year.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.