L 21 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons

Mr Chair,

I take the floor to explain New Zealand’s vote on draft resolution L.21 entitled “Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.” As in previous years, New Zealand has voted against this resolution.

New Zealand remains unconvinced by the assertion in PP 3 and PP 8 that a multilateral agreement focused on prohibiting only the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be an effective or useful contribution toward a nuclear-weapon free world. In particular, we do not believe in its utility as a legal measure to move us forward beyond the current nuclear status quo. We do not therefore agree with the call in OP 1 for the CD to commence negotiations on this issue.

Further, we believe that a resolution directed at the issue of a prohibition on the use of nuclear weapons is seriously deficient if it omits to recall the need for states to comply at all times with International Humanitarian Law. And I note in this regard recent observations by the President of the ICRC regarding how difficult it is to conceive of any usage of nuclear weapons consistent with IHL.

We also note the omission from a text purporting to promote nuclear disarmament of any reference to either of the existing treaties designed to underpin the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. I refer, of course, to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.