FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2005 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

STATEMENT BY THE NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR FOR DISARMAMENT TIM CAUGHLEY

MONDAY 8 APRIL 2002

AS DELIVERED
Mr Chairman

The approach of my country to the work of this Committee has already been set out by the distinguished representative of Egypt. It is the hope of the New Zealand delegation that the New Agenda’s working document referred to by Egypt will be seen as a constructive effort to facilitate the goals of the review process.

Mr Chairman, these goals, and calls for their implementation, have been set out clearly in the documents of previous NPT Review Conferences. These include the 1995 Decision on “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament” and the Final Document of the Review Conference of 2000, especially the 13 “practical steps”. The force of our collective purpose to secure these goals and the universality of the Treaty has been articulated in clear terms in both documents.

And behind these documents of course, Mr Chairman, are the legally binding terms in the Treaty itself, a Treaty which will have been in force for 35 years by the time the current review concludes in 2005.

Mr Chairman in 1995, 25 years after the entry into force of the Treaty, the Review Conference affirmed the “need to continue to move with determination towards the full realization and effective implementation” of the provisions of the Treaty. The Conference in 2000 reaffirmed that every effort should be made to implement the Treaty in all its aspects and proceeded in respect of Article VI to express its “deep concern at the continued risk for humanity” of the existence of high numbers of nuclear weapons deployed and stockpiled. Between the 1995 and 2000 Reviews there was, as you know, the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ containing the unanimous statement of the obligation to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. Mr Chairman, as the New Agenda working papers makes clear, a fundamental pre-requisite to promoting nuclear non-proliferation is continuous, irreversible progress in nuclear arms reductions.

Mr Chairman, we meet now at a time of comparative insecurity. The horrific consequences of terrorism have been felt the world over, and most tragically in this city. New Zealand remains highly concerned that terrorists might one day acquire or even use nuclear weapons. It stands to reason that the best way to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists and of countries of concern is to eliminate them entirely.

Our Treaty’s Review Conference in 2000 identified 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. With our partners in the New Agenda group, we call for those steps to be implemented without delay. The undertaking to achieve the total elimination of nuclear arsenals was unequivocal. We want now to see practical action to make good that undertaking.
We make a particular call for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are glad there is no more testing in the Pacific region and we want to see nuclear testing banned everywhere. The CTBT constitutes an effective disarmament measure and we are confident that on entry into force it will have an effective verification system sufficient to deter breaches.

Mr Chairman, through Article VII, our Treaty created the space for the development of nuclear weapon free zones. This has been a key method of nuclear disarmament around the world. We are party to the South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty. With other zone members in Latin America, South East Asia and in Africa, we hope to promote the concept of a Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas free of nuclear weapons. With Brazil, New Zealand has put forward resolutions on this concept at recent UN General Assemblies. We hope to help organize a declaration and in due course, a conference, to mark the fact that all the independent countries of the Southern Hemisphere are free of nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairman

The NPT makes it explicit that countries should cooperate in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. At the same time, there are significant nuclear safety challenges that we must face together. We would hope that nuclear industries in some states would not impact negatively on the sustainable development of other states. For our region, a key challenge is the maritime transport of nuclear materials. New Zealand calls, again, for the highest possible safety standards, for effective emergency response, liability and compensation arrangements, and for adequate prior information and consultation with coastal states.

Mr Chairman, we welcomed the strengthened review process agreed in 1995. We welcomed the agreement, by consensus, of the forward looking and constructive Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. At this Preparatory Committee, we have the chance to take stock of the implementation of those undertakings, and to work for further progress at our next Review in 2005. Mr Chairman, My delegation has said in other disarmament forums that adaptation to changing realities and consolidation are not mutually exclusive options.

Mr Chairman, we are delighted to see you in the chair, and you can be assured of our tireless support. As you know, New Zealand’s commitment to the principles of nuclear disarmament is long-standing and consistent. We want a world free of nuclear weapons. But principles alone are not enough. We need measurable, practical action, and in the 2000 Final Document, we have as the distinguished representative of Egypt has stated on behalf of the New Agenda, a blueprint for exactly the actions that are required.

Thank you Mr Chairman