2005 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

MAIN COMMITTEE I

STATEMENT BY
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20 MAY 2005
Mr Chairman

I am pleased to address the subject of disarmament and non-proliferation education today.

In considering how best to enhance the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we must remain mindful of the vital role that civil society plays in generating progress within individual governments of the NPT regime. Education in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation is essential for maintaining and strengthening the links between the Treaty regime and the international community that it serves.

The full and effective implementation of the NPT will require active engagement between governments and all sectors of civil society, including regional and international organizations and academic institutions.

Governments have much to gain from NGO participation in the NPT review process. Institutional memory on technical issues developed over the NPT's 35-year history is often housed in academic institutions and think tanks. Effective partnership with such institutions enhances the efforts of delegations and facilitates continuity for the Treaty's review process as a whole.

New Zealand was honoured to be represented in the United Nations Secretary-General's expert group on disarmament and non-proliferation education in 2002. We support the UN Study's recommendations, and urge all States to take effective measures to ensure their full implementation on a national and international level.

In this context, New Zealand was pleased to co-sponsor a working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education (NPT/CONF.2005/2(PC.11/WP.17)) with Egypt, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Poland, and Sweden for the Conference. This paper contains concrete steps for the further development of disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives.

New Zealand included two NGO representatives on our delegation for the Review Conference and has found this a valuable way to strengthen links between government and civil society perspectives, enhancing education opportunities on all sides. In bolstering the NPT, we can best represent the interests of the Treaty as a whole by including as many voices as possible through processes of outreach and education on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.