

**STATEMENT BY
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT IN GENEVA**

ON BEHALF OF THE NEW AGENDA COALITION

01 MAY 2007

**FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR
THE 2010 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE
VIENNA, 30 APRIL - 11 MAY 2007**

**Preparatory Committee for NPT 2010 Review Conference – First Session
30 April – 11 May 2007, Vienna**

General Statement on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition

Mr Chairman,

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

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Session of the Preparatory Committee to the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The work you have accomplished to date is much appreciated and we are grateful for the extensive consultations that you have conducted over many months with States Parties to the Treaty. We are fully confident that your diplomatic skills and experience will provide appropriate guidance for a successful outcome to our deliberations. We would like to assure you of our full support in this regard.

This is the first in a series of meetings in preparation for the Eighth Review Conference of the Treaty, in three years' time. Regrettably, the last review cycle did not conclude with a substantive or satisfactory outcome. Much time has been spent in the interim attempting to find an answer as to why this was allowed to occur. There is no one answer to this question, however, only one conclusion: the review process for the 2010 Review Conference, which is now underway, must result in a successful outcome for all aspects of the Treaty and work towards achieving its universality. It must strengthen States Parties' cooperation and commitment. It must strengthen the three pillars at the core of the Treaty. And, it must work towards the implementation of the commitments made by States Parties at previous Review Conferences towards the effective realisation of the Treaty's fundamental goal: the elimination of nuclear weapons from this world.

This objective has been recognised as a legal obligation by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996.

The NPT has of late come under stress, and difficulties in the international security environment have prompted some to forecast its demise. It is true that certain events in recent years have posed challenges to the Treaty, but we remain mindful of how much the Treaty has achieved over the duration of its history as a vital instrument of international relations. While the NPT's membership now comprises almost the entire international community, the Treaty has not achieved universality despite its entry into force 37 years ago. This remains a source of concern to the New Agenda Coalition. The Coalition has consistently called upon all States Parties to spare no effort to achieve the universality of the NPT, and urges India, Israel and Pakistan, which are not yet Parties to the Treaty, to accede to it as non-nuclear weapon-States promptly and without conditions.

With each challenge, we are presented a new opportunity to renew and strengthen our commitment to the Treaty's goals and principles. Now is the time to redouble our efforts, not shy away from our responsibilities.

We expect that the current review cycle will proceed in this spirit and that States Parties will play a constructive role in the forthcoming deliberations. We look forward to a positive atmosphere to the proceedings, and are determined to play our part in safeguarding the NPT regime and securing a balanced and fair approach to its review.

Mr Chairman,

As we begin this new review cycle, we would recall the importance of all Parties abiding by the commitments which they undertake. How can we negotiate in good faith new commitments aimed at strengthening the Treaty if our previous agreements can be discarded and regarded as no longer relevant? Commitments and undertakings freely given in an international consensus document retain, in our view, a particular legitimacy and validity. We need to focus on their implementation, not their renegotiation or revision.

We would recall in particular the importance of the decisions, and the Resolution on the Middle East, adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. These commitments are in our view an integral part of the decision made to indefinitely extend the Treaty. However, the New Agenda Coalition notes that no progress has been achieved in the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the region. The Coalition renews its support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction and in this regard, deems it urgent to take concrete steps to achieve this objective.

At the Review Conference in 2000, States Parties to the NPT unanimously agreed to Thirteen Practical Steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the Treaty and paragraphs 3 and 4(c) of the 1995 Decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament". An unequivocal undertaking was given by the nuclear weapon-States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, and a framework to deliver this was agreed.

This was an exceptional achievement for all concerned. And yet, in the seven years since this agreement was made, there have been few advances in the implementation of the Thirteen Practical Steps. Indeed, it is a matter of concern that some would now seem to call this agreement into question.

At the Review Conference in 2000 States Parties also reaffirmed the unanimous commitment at the Review and Extension Conference in 1995 not to enter into new nuclear supply arrangements with parties that did not accept IAEA full-scope safeguards on their nuclear facilities. Recent developments have given us grounds for serious concern about the implications for the Treaty of such arrangements being entered into with States not Party to the NPT.

We accept that the international security environment can and does change, and with the priorities afforded different issues by States Parties. But this should not affect

the validity and legitimacy of commitments jointly agreed at earlier conferences, in particular those in 1995 and 2000.

The review process offers us an opportunity to “review the operation of [the NPT] with a view to assuring that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the Treaty are being realised.” It is essential that we do this and give due respect to all articles of the Treaty, and those agreements made unanimously by States Parties at past Review Conferences in an attempt to implement Treaty’s objectives. To ignore our responsibilities in this regard will not erase them.

Mr Chairman,

The achievement of nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of non-proliferation obligations under the NPT are both central to the Treaty’s success. Attempts to secure advances on non-proliferation, while at the same time diminishing the significance of nuclear disarmament, are therefore counterproductive. Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. In the first instance, what does not exist cannot proliferate. But, crucially, it must also be evident that the genuine implementation of irreversible, verifiable and transparent nuclear weapon reductions, leading to their total elimination, can only serve to diminish the perceived utility of these weapons, and thus their desirability.

The New Agenda Coalition has repeatedly emphasised that any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapon-States is incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The New Agenda Coalition has always maintained that the only real guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination as well as the assurance that they will not be produced ever again. While nuclear weapons continue to exist, the Coalition urges the Nuclear Weapons States to renew and honour their existing commitments in relation to negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, and to give effect to these through a legally-binding instrument or instruments.

Mr Chairman,

We acknowledge that reductions in non-strategic and strategic nuclear arsenals have taken place since the end of the Cold War. However, it is far from certain what progress has been made in recent years. The negotiation of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) in 2002, for example, represented a positive downward trend in the deployment of nuclear weapons; but, it did not involve any warhead destruction, agreed counting rules or new verification measures.

The importance of transparency in a treaty such as the NPT goes without saying. It is clear, however, that the NPT regime is currently operating under a transparency deficit, especially with regard to the nuclear weapon-States.

If nuclear disarmament measures are to be successful, they must be conducted as a series of phased transparent, verifiable and irreversible reductions. These phased reductions will permit nuclear-weapon States to satisfy themselves at each stage of the process that further downward movements can be made safely and securely, and will also demonstrate to the wider international community the extent of the implementation of disarmament commitments.

Therefore, in the interest of greater transparency and confidence building, and as a baseline for future disarmament measures, the nuclear weapon-States should be ready to publish their aggregate holdings of nuclear weapons on active and reserve status, and to do so in a uniform and consistent manner.

We note that the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) will expire before the 2010 Review Conference, and would urge the US and Russia to commence negotiations of a follow-up treaty incorporating the same disarmament principles while implementing further reductions.

Mr Chairman,

It is a regrettable fact that, since 2000, the international community has witnessed the emergence of new military doctrines emphasising the importance of nuclear weapons, not only to defence, but also to the offensive capabilities of States. Plans to modernize nuclear forces and introduce tactical uses to nuclear weapons have reinforced these doctrines. Moreover, certain policies have broadened the scope of potential use of nuclear weapons, for example as a preventive measure or in retaliation against the use of other Weapons of Mass Destruction. There is a serious question as to whether such developments are compatible with the object and purpose of the NPT.

If the nuclear-weapon States continue to treat nuclear weapons as a security enhancer, there is a real danger that other states will start pondering whether they should do the same. We have seen some examples of this already but these may multiply. Such a scenario would be in direct contradiction to the very purpose and objectives of the NPT itself. Any increase in the number of States possessing nuclear weapons can only serve to further exacerbate already existing regional tensions, further undermine the goals of nuclear disarmament and ultimately increase the likelihood of nuclear weapons use. The nuclear weapons test announced by the DPRK last October, which the New Agenda has condemned, provides a graphic illustration of these dangers.

Mr Chairman,

When we highlight current realities, we do so because, having foregone such weapons, the non-nuclear weapons States have a right to do so. Indeed, given the horrendous devastation of which these armaments are capable, we have a duty to do so.

There is only one guarantee that a nuclear weapon will never again be used and that is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. As we have been reminded recently by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report: "So long as any State has nuclear weapons, others will want them. So long as any such weapon remains, there is a risk that they will one day be used, by design or accident. And any such use would be catastrophic."