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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT
BY
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OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, GENEVA**

**ON BEHALF OF THE
NEW AGENDA COALITION**

**GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIRST COMMITTEE**

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Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Partners of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), namely Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and my own country, South Africa. Please accept our congratulations on your assumption of the Chair of this year's First Committee and the assurance of the NAC's support for your efforts to steer us towards a successful and meaningful conclusion of our deliberations during the next four weeks.

Mr. Chairperson,

This year's First Committee coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. Furthermore, it also coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No other event in human history has more tragically and vividly illustrated the horror of nuclear weapons. Today, the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki continues to provide real meaning to the collective efforts of the international community to rid the planet of nuclear weapons and, indeed, all weapons of mass destruction.

International peace and security continues to be threatened by the development and possession of nuclear weapons and the real risk of such weapons being used. Despite the international community's best efforts to date, the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation remains a reality. That risk is exacerbated in situations where conflict and inadequate safeguards exist. It is disconcerting that a State Party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has sought to withdraw from it. It is also disconcerting that another State Party has entered into a nuclear co-operation agreement with a State not Party to the NPT.

In view of these threatening developments, the New Agenda Coalition believes that efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons proliferation cannot be sustainable without equal efforts being made to eliminate nuclear weapons. This is why nuclear disarmament is as important – if not more important – today, than it has been in the past.

Mr. Chairperson,

In 1998 the Foreign Ministers of the New Agenda Coalition *inter alia* declared that the NAC Partners were, and I quote, “jointly resolved to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons”. At the outset, I wish to make it clear that the Coalition's resolve remains as strong as ever, as does its commitment to further the cause of nuclear disarmament.

At present, the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime faces significant challenges. The failure of the 2005 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference to achieve any substantive outcome serves to confirm this. In

addition, the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to reach agreement on a Programme of Work further underscores this fact, as does the delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to name but a few examples.

Mr. Chairperson,

The New Agenda Coalition continues to believe that the NPT remains the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament and we therefore repeat our call for its universality. In essence, the Treaty requires those who do not possess nuclear weapons not to acquire such weapons, whilst also requiring those who do possess them, to disarm. At the same time it also recognizes the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with the Treaty.

The review processes of the Treaty have worked to strengthen its implementation. The outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, including the decisions reached and the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East, as well as the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, established concrete obligations for States Parties to ensure the successful completion of the Treaty's objectives, including the nuclear-weapon States' unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, that now unfortunately amount to as many as 30 000 nuclear weapons. As we are all aware, these commitments still stand.

While there can be little doubt that the latest NPT Review Conference failed to inspire the international community to believe that the elimination of nuclear weapons was any closer than it had been in 2000, it did not affect the status of previously agreed commitments. We remain concerned at efforts by some States parties to disengage, or draw back, from agreements already made within the context of the NPT umbrella. Such actions undermine the Treaty and encourage attempts to re-negotiate agreements already reached. In addition, they contradict the very essence of multilateralism.

Mr. Chairperson,

The New Agenda Coalition remains very concerned about current proliferation risks. Through our work towards nuclear disarmament, the New Agenda Coalition's objective is to improve the security of all nations. In this context, we remain convinced that positive progress on nuclear disarmament would also improve global security with respect to proliferation. It is logical that these issues are inextricably linked.

Therefore, progress on both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is required in order to attain the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. Although this is not a new concept, some States Parties continue to place primary emphasis on one or the other of these aspects. NPT States Parties should not argue that all is well with any one particular aspect of the Treaty – be it nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, or peaceful uses – or that one aspect outweighs the others. If we wish to make progress, it should therefore be clear that all aspects of the NPT should be strictly implemented and

enforced. Each article of the NPT remains binding on all States Parties at all times and in all circumstances and it is imperative that all States Parties be held fully accountable for strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty.

The NAC has always maintained that the only real guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination, and the assurance that they will never be produced again. As a positive step, and for as long as nuclear weapons exist, the nuclear-weapon States need to reaffirm and respect fully their existing commitments with regard to security assurances, pending the conclusion of multilaterally negotiated legally binding security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

Mr. Chairperson,

It goes without saying that the continued existence of nuclear weapons also increases the risk of such weapons falling into the hands of Non-State Actors, despite the best preventive efforts of those who possess nuclear weapons. In this regard, it should be clear that the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States remains incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as well as with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

In addition to the above, Mr. Chairperson, the New Agenda Coalition seeks accelerated implementation of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation obligations and the achievement of the universality of the NPT.

We therefore:

- Call upon India, Israel and Pakistan, who continue to retain the nuclear-weapons option and who have not yet acceded to the NPT, to accede to it as non-nuclear weapon States promptly and without conditions and to place all of their nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards;
- Urge all States Parties, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to implement the 2000 NPT Review Conference's practical steps on nuclear disarmament;
- Call upon the Conference on Disarmament, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to agree on a Programme of Work and to resume negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein, taking into account both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.
- Reaffirm the importance and the urgency of signatures and ratifications required to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty;

- Recall that the principles of irreversibility, transparency and verifiability are key elements for the nuclear disarmament process.
- Call for a reversal of the continuing role given to nuclear weapons as part of security doctrines, including rationalizations for the use, and the possible development, of new types of nuclear weapons.
- Recall the resolution on the Middle East, which was an integral part of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT and renew our support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we are all aware, the recently concluded General Assembly High Level Summit failed to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The New Agenda Coalition deeply regrets this lost opportunity, which further underscores the challenges to the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, Mr. Chairperson, these and other challenges strengthen the NAC's resolve and commitment to pursue the objectives set out in the Joint Declaration of its Foreign Ministers on 9 June 1998 in order to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

I thank you.