



Statement Delivered by

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to the United Nations,
Geneva**

**On behalf of
THE NEW AGENDA COALITION
(Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, New Zealand)**

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Madam Chair,

On behalf of the New Agenda Coalition composed of Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, New Zealand and my own country Egypt, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee and offer you our best wishes and full support.

It has been the long standing tradition of the First Committee that the general debate is launched by Mexico. The delegation of Mexico this year has graciously decided to provide the coordinator of the New Agenda Coalition with the opportunity to take its place as first speaker as an indication of its unequivocal commitment to the objectives and values of this group in promoting the objective of nuclear disarmament. I take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation and that of the other members of the Coalition to Mexico and reaffirm our solidarity and resolve to enhance our common objectives for the sake of international peace and security.

Madam Chair,

There is no doubt that the international disarmament efforts have not lived up to our collective aspirations and shared commitments. We have witnessed for the past few years a series of setbacks and undesired outcomes which have impeded progress and prevented much needed achievements. This regrettable impasse moreover, comes at a time when the international community is witnessing a chain of unprecedented security challenges that merit serious attention and add a pressing need to strengthen cooperation among states. If there was ever a time to demonstrate strong and determined political will in the field of nuclear disarmament, it is now that such spirit and resolve must surface. This current impasse needs to be reversed and the New Agenda Coalition is determined to play a constructive and helpful role in this much needed process.

Madam Chair,

It is our collective belief that the mere existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use not only pose a threat to international peace and security but also destabilize an already volatile world witnessing profound, unpredictable changes. The need to eliminate nuclear weapons is as pressing as ever, and it is for this reason, that the New Agenda Coalition would like to address today the following points:

The Coalition reiterates its firm belief that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of our global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Its three pillars, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy constitute an important foundation in maintaining international peace and security. There is a pressing need to see prompt action by nuclear weapon states to implement their nuclear disarmament commitments made under Article VI of the Treaty, including the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Given the increasing concerns about the lack of implementation of the commitments made within the framework of the NPT regime particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to inform Member States of the New Agenda Coalition's intention to submit to the First Committee its yearly resolution, for the acceleration of implementation of these commitments.

Madam Chair,

Given the importance we attribute to the NPT, we strongly believe that achieving its universality is essential in promoting international peace and security. We urge the international community to exert all possible efforts to achieve this objective and call upon the three states that are not party to the Treaty to accede to it as non-nuclear weapon states. We also call upon the state that has announced its withdrawal from the Treaty to rescind its decision.

We also call upon all States Parties to the NPT to comply faithfully with their obligations in conformity with Article III and IV of the treaty. In this regard, we highly value the efforts of the IAEA in preventing diversion of nuclear material from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. There has been a clear tendency in contemporary disarmament discourse to treat nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation as if they were two separate, disconnected issues. Attempts to secure advances on non-proliferation, while retreating from nuclear disarmament commitments is counterproductive. We believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes and consequently, should be dealt with as such.

Madam Chair,

The Coalition stresses the importance of full implementation of commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference adopted a set of Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and a resolution on the Middle East which need to be realized. 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. There is no doubt that accelerating the implementation of these commitments would contribute significantly to establishing a much safer world. The New Agenda Coalition is ready to engage with other parties to the Treaty in a constructive dialogue to explore creative methods to realize progress in this regard.

The New Agenda Coalition is looking forward to the commencement of the next NPT Review Cycle with great determination, hope, and optimism. Having in mind previous experiences, some of which were positive and others discouraging, there is a pressing need at this critical stage in time to exert maximum political will to ensure a successful and productive review cycle which commences in May next year when the First Session of the Preparatory Committee convenes. The New Agenda Coalition will fully cooperate with others during this upcoming preparatory process. We are prepared to play our part in safeguarding the NPT regime and strengthening it in all its aspects.

Madam Chair,

The Coalition remains concerned also about plans to research the development of new types and uses of nuclear weapons and the modification of existing ones. At a time when international efforts are being exerted to downgrade the role of nuclear weapons, reports that some States are in the process of developing new types of nuclear weapons or contemplating lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons have been particularly disturbing. For our part, we will continue to

insist on further reductions in strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals and continue to urge that nuclear disarmament measure incorporate the essential elements of irreversibility, verification, and transparency in order to guarantee the confidence of the international community.

The role of civil society is of utmost importance in supporting the cause of nuclear disarmament and compliments other efforts striving to achieve that end. In this context, we would like to voice our full support for a broad and systematic participation of non-governmental organizations in disarmament who advocate for a world free of nuclear weapons.

We are also concerned about the risk of non-state actors gaining access to nuclear weapons. This issue deserves our serious consideration. Despite efforts by the international community and others, vast amounts of nuclear material world-wide remain susceptible to theft and diversion. There is a pressing need to address the safe use of nuclear material and strengthen international cooperation in this field.

Madam Chair,

There is only one guarantee that a nuclear weapon will never be used and that is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. As we have been reminded recently in the WMD 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."

Nuclear bombs can kill, intimidate and terrorize. They cannot bridge differences, promote dialogue, nor ensure sustainable development.

Thank you.