

**STATEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT MADE ON
BEHALF OF THE NEW AGENDA COALITION
(BRAZIL, EGYPT, IRELAND, MEXICO, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH AFRICA
AND SWEDEN)**

**BY TIM CAUGHLEY, AMBASSADOR FOR DISARMAMENT OF NEW
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Mr President

On behalf of the New Agenda Coalition may I congratulate you and Nigeria on your assumption of the Presidency of this Conference and offer you and your country our best wishes and support for your term in the chair.

Mr President, I make this statement on behalf of the seven members of the New Agenda Coalition, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden and my own country, New Zealand.

As members of this body know, the New Agenda is a cross regional grouping formed to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament. The focus of our efforts remains within the review process of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and it is in the context of the upcoming NPT Review Conference that we make this statement.

It is appropriate, however, that our first point relates to the Conference on Disarmament itself. We share deeply the concern of other members that the CD has been unable to meet the expectations of the 2000 NPT Review Conference in respect of this body's programme of work. It is bitterly disappointing that the CD has failed either to establish an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament or to begin negotiations on banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

In the case of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the CD has been unable to agree on a work programme that includes conclusion of negotiations within the specified timeframe of five years. Worse, we have failed to live up to the measure we agreed in respect of negotiations for such a treaty under the heading "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

These failures have not only harmed the credibility of the Conference on Disarmament but have done nothing to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself. Each unfulfilled agreement and undertaking reached at Review Conferences merely serves to diminish the Treaty, not strengthen it.

More than ever before, the New Agenda wants the CD to get down to work. We acknowledge the efforts that have been made to overcome the impasse in the CD through the A5 proposal and Ambassador Chris Sanders' "Food for Thought" non-paper. We strongly urge CD members to make all possible efforts to agree on a programme of work.

The preparatory process for the 2005 Review Conference has been beset by efforts by several of the nuclear-weapon states to renege from the agreed practical steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of Article VI of NPT, rather than implement them.

The broad support for the Coalition's UN General Assembly Resolution A/Res/59/75 entitled "Accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments" surely demonstrates increased impatience and dissatisfaction with progress under this pillar of the NPT.

It is salutary to recall the unambiguous statement from the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference to which all States party agreed: "The Conference reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". In order to reflect developments since 2000, we could add that the achievement of this goal would help contribute significantly to offset the risk of nuclear proliferation to States as well as non-state actors.

It follows from what I have just said that the New Agenda sees the pursuit of nuclear disarmament as a fundamental tool in addressing the international community's deep concern about proliferation. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. And as the New Agenda Coalition has said before, what does not exist cannot proliferate. In the meantime, our focus must be on systematic and progressive efforts to implement the obligation in Article VI to pursue negotiations on effective measures on nuclear disarmament.

The continued retention of nuclear weapons or the unsatisfactory rate of progress in the elimination of those weapons is not a justification for proliferation by other states.

The challenges to the Treaty come not only from those who would act in contravention of or usurp its rules against proliferation. They also come from other quarters. Plans to extend or modify rather than destroy existing nuclear weaponry challenge the Treaty. Any member who seeks to diminish previous undertakings or reinterprets them challenges the Treaty. Any member whose approach fails to reflect the careful balance of the NPT challenges the Treaty. The New Agenda continues to be concerned that India, Israel and Pakistan remain outside the Treaty.

In his recent report "In Larger Freedom" the UN Secretary General has pointed out that "the unique status of the nuclear weapon States also entails a unique responsibility, and they must do more, including but not limited to further reductions in their arsenals and pursuing arms control agreements that entail not just dismantlement but irreversibility". We call on the permanent members of the Security Council to seize the opportunity for leadership to help strengthen the NPT as the cornerstone of international security.

We welcome the statement by the President of the United States on the 35th anniversary of the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in which he reaffirmed the "determination of the United States to carry out its treaty commitments and to work to ensure its continuance in the interest of world peace and security". We have taken at face value commitments of this kind to the NPT.

But global security is not a zero-sum game. Every State has a fundamental stake in it. It requires all of our collective efforts, understanding of each other's threat perceptions and willingness to engage and negotiate. Pulling the net tighter around those that seek weapons of mass destruction equally entails a collective endeavour.

In terms of logic it would seem counter-productive towards securing advances on proliferation by attempting to diminish the significance of nuclear disarmament. Ironically, attempts to downplay or undercut the 2000 outcome serve only to draw attention to nuclear disarmament and away from non-proliferation. The New Agenda is prepared to play its part in safeguarding the NPT regime and securing a balanced approach at the Review Conference.

The Review Conference offers a timely, indeed an essential, opportunity for the international community as a whole to address the challenges to which I have referred. Our approach will be to emphasise that nuclear disarmament is a basic tool to help offset proliferation and is therefore a central element in a balanced outcome.

The New Agenda is deeply concerned about plans to research the development of new weapons or the modification of existing ones. We will press for practical implementation of existing obligations and undertakings, including the universalisation of the Treaty. We will give credit where credit is due to efforts to de-alert and stockpile weapons but will insist on further reductions in the strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals and the operationalisation of steps agreed upon. If these measures are to gain the confidence of the international community, they must incorporate the essential elements of irreversibility, verification and transparency. As implied earlier, we will not accept the mere reiteration of solemn undertakings entered into at past Review Conferences but left unfulfilled.

There have been increasing concerns about the lack of compliance and implementation of the commitments made in the context of the NPT regime. The 2005 Review Conference should address this issue in a comprehensive manner taking into account all three pillars of the Treaty as well as the outcomes of the past review conferences.

The New Agenda welcomes the efforts that have been made in the context of the Six Party Talks. These need to address peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula, including the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea's proclaimed nuclear weapons programme.

We also welcome the negotiations that are taking place between Germany, France and the United Kingdom, supported by the High Representative of the EU, and Iran in regard to addressing the latter's nuclear activities.

The New Agenda is concerned, however, about the risk of non-state actors gaining access to nuclear weapons. We are also concerned about the risk that despite strenuous efforts by the nuclear-weapon States and others vast amounts of nuclear material world-wide remain susceptible to theft and diversion.

These are all factors that demonstrate that there is only one guarantee for a safe and peaceful world and that is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. There has never before been a more urgent need for all states including the five nuclear weapon states to deliver on their commitments under the regime of the NPT in the common interest.

Mr President, in conclusion it will be apparent from the New Agenda's approach to the NPT Review Conference that our objective is a world free of nuclear weapons held currently by those who undertook 35 years ago to eliminate them as well as those who have secured them outside the Treaty.

Thank you Mr President.