



Statement by

H.E. Dell Higgin

Ambassador for Disarmament and Permanent Representative of New Zealand
to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition

at the

2nd Preparatory Committee of 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Cluster I

Geneva, 25 April 2018

Thank you Mr Chair.

I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition – Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, and my own country, New Zealand.

As is well known, the NAC was born out of concern at the lack of progress in the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. Twenty years on, our concerns remain and continue to motivate our focus on the need for urgent implementation of NPT-related nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments.

This focus is evident in the NAC's existing contributions to the current NPT review cycle, including WP.9 and WP.13 submitted to the first Preparatory Committee meeting in 2017. WP.9 entitled 'Taking forward nuclear disarmament' reflected our deep dissatisfaction with the current state of implementation by the nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments. Emphasising the new information and awareness that has emerged with regard to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the risk of a nuclear weapon detonation, WP.9 called on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations flowing from Article VI without further delay. In WP.13, the NAC highlighted the importance of the NPT review process evaluating compliance with existing obligations *and* developing new measures. It put forward specific recommendations to improve greater transparency, measurability and accountability for compliance.

The NAC wishes to reconfirm the ongoing relevance of those contributions and will continue to work for their implementation and reflection over the course of the current review cycle. In our approach to this Preparatory Committee meeting, however, we have focused our working paper – NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.13 – solely on the many nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments that have been agreed already in the outcomes of previous Review Conferences. In doing so, we aim to shine a spotlight on the common ground that already exists with respect to the implementation of Article VI.

Mr Chair,

It is deeply regrettable that, in 2018, it is necessary to “go back to basics” in this way. But, as UN High Representative Nakamitsu has highlighted, there are deeply troubling signs that nuclear disarmament commitments may no longer be valued. These signs include active consideration by nuclear-weapon States of an increased role for nuclear weapons in security doctrines and their pursuit of programmes for upgrading, enhancing and extending existing nuclear arsenals. Although we welcome that the United States of America and the Russian Federation have completed the nuclear weapon reductions agreed under the New START, we note with concern that, at present, there are no new bilateral negotiations on nuclear weapons reductions under way. Instead we appear to be heading towards a new nuclear arms race.

These challenges – and reactions to them – serve to highlight the growing division within the NPT community. Some have found it convenient to suggest that this division has come about not as a result of the failure of the nuclear-weapon States to act in conformity with Article VI but, instead, as a result of the Humanitarian Initiative and the recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Such an assertion might have had some credibility if there were anything in the text of the Prohibition Treaty which could stand in the way of the fulfilment by any State Party of its NPT obligations and commitments, including any of the agreed Review Conference undertakings – but there is not. Indeed, as the NAC and many other supporters of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons have substantiated on a number of occasions, that Treaty reaffirms that the NPT serves as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and complements and strengthens the obligations contained within it.

Instead, it is the lack of follow-through on implementation of Article VI and efforts to reinterpret it or roll-back undertakings given in the review process, particularly by the nuclear weapon States, that continue to be the main source of division within the NPT. As the NAC has highlighted before, the continued existence of nuclear weapons almost 50 years after the entry into force of the NPT contradicts obligations and commitments made under the Treaty. NPT States parties should take into account that failure to fulfil agreements and undertakings reached at successive Review Conferences diminishes the credibility of the Treaty and may pose a threat to the long-term sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The NAC does not accept the notion put forward by the nuclear-weapon States and those committed to extended nuclear deterrence that further progress towards nuclear disarmament requires a more conducive international security environment. Rather, it is the implementation of existing nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments that will contribute to improving the global environment. Such implementation is also imperative to sustain the health of our NPT regime.

This Preparatory Committee, and the forthcoming Review Conference, is a vital opportunity for all States Parties, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to demonstrate their commitment to the full implementation of the Treaty.

It is the responsibility of all States Parties of the NPT to move forward with urgency in implementing their Article VI obligations and related commitments in order to maintain the good standing of the NPT and its Review Process.

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