



**Statement by H.E. Dell Higgle
Ambassador For Disarmament &
Permanent Representative to the CD**

**UNGA 74 First Committee
Conventional Weapons Statement**

25 October 2019

Mr Chair,

New Zealand's fervent support for multilateralism and international institutions and our respect for international law is reflected, as well, in our commitment to international humanitarian law (IHL). Our wish to ensure compliance with IHL and to advance the protections it affords has led us to play our part in recent years in developing a number of important conventional weapons treaties including the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. These three treaties all hold the promise of greater protection for civilians, including in conflict areas, and we continue to work strongly toward their universalisation and implementation – both of which are key to delivering on their important security and humanitarian benefits.

The ATT has been a particular focus for New Zealand. Alongside Australia we have hosted several workshops to support treaty universalisation in the Pacific. We have produced model implementing legislation, copies of which are available for delegates. Very recently, we have assumed the responsibilities of Chair of the Treaty's Voluntary Trust Fund and held a workshop yesterday together with the ATT Secretariat on the process for applying for funding for projects that advance the Treaty's implementation. We welcome the broad engagement evident on ATT Implementation - including at the most recent CSP.

New Zealand remains committed, too, to universalising the **Convention on Cluster Munitions**. As a member of its Coordination Committee, we were pleased to host a regional workshop in Manila this year and to co-host with Iraq a side event here last week, which focused on the future of the Treaty as it celebrates the 10 years since its adoption. We look forward to continuing our outreach efforts under this treaty.

Alongside these existing instruments, we are also focused on ensuring that we respond to new and compelling issues. For instance, we have been actively engaged with our partners in the Core Group on the issue of **Explosive Weapons In Populated Areas** and participated in the Vienna Conference at the start of this month. We welcome the fact that an overwhelming majority of states there were supportive of the negotiation of a political declaration in order, *inter alia*, to spotlight the need for full compliance with IHL in situations where these weapons are used. Action on EWIPA is imperative, as SG Guterres has recently drawn attention to, in order to redress the immediate and long-term patterns of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure from these weapons.

Beyond New Zealand's advocacy for these important instruments on the global stage, we are also focused on ensuring that our national frameworks on conventional weapons – including relevant pieces of domestic legislation – are robust and responsive. Our parliament is currently considering new firearms legislation, which will improve our ability to monitor firearms lawfully entering and exiting New Zealand and enhance our ability to combat transnational organised crime. This legislation would also enable New Zealand to accede to the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. The new draft legislation goes further than the urgent changes made to New Zealand's Arms Act in April this year, which prohibited military style semi-automatic weapons,

including those of the type used in the horrific terrorist attack against the Muslim community in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, New Zealand looks forward to continuing working – with all our partners – on advancing these, and other, international conventional weapons issues.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

NZ disarmament statements online, www.converge.org.nz/pma/nzdist.htm