



Statement by

H.E. Dell Higgin

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

at the

3rd Preparatory Committee of 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

General Debate

New York, 29 April 2018

Mr Chair,

New Zealand is delighted to have you, Ambassador Hussin, a colleague from our near-neighbourhood, in the chair for this third and final Preparatory Committee for the 2020 review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We welcome the emphasis you have placed on ensuring the sanctity and integrity of the NPT and are grateful for your leadership as we head towards next year's important Review Conference.

In just a few weeks' time, it will be 50 years to the day since New Zealand deposited its instrument of ratification of the NPT. We have been active supporters of the Treaty now for virtually half a century and throughout this period it has remained the central element in our international obligations relating to nuclear weapons.

Over the same timeframe, New Zealand has signed on to other obligations in the nuclear domain - most notably those pursuant to our regional Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (the Treaty of Rarotonga), the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons - as well as to undertakings, for example, in relation to our membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The same is true, no doubt, for many, if not all, other members of the NPT family who will similarly have amplified their nuclear weapon disarmament and non-proliferation undertakings by joining a range of related instruments.

But throughout the half-century of its existence, NPT State Parties have been united in their agreement that this Treaty is our cornerstone commitment. It has remained the cornerstone ultimately because it has continued to provide our collective membership with something we all value. The 'Grand Bargain' at the heart of the Treaty is premised on meeting our security needs as well as our disarmament aspirations.

It is true, nonetheless, that there can be quite a difference of emphasis when States Parties characterise exactly where the Treaty's value lies. This is not exactly surprising – it could even be described as a routine feature of multilateral outcomes when they are founded, like the NPT, on compromise. It is perfectly legitimate for States to give greater profile to those aspects of an outcome that best reflect their own domestic concerns and priorities –

provided, of course, that they do not overlook implementation of the deal in its entirety.

For many of the 95 states voting in the UN General Assembly in favour of the NPT's adoption in 1968 the inclusion of the disarmament undertaking – its Article VI – was a key factor influencing their vote. Conversely, those who had not welcomed its text no doubt factored it in much less positively.

Mr Chair,

Our membership is right to insist that *all* the Treaty's obligations – those relating to non-proliferation fully as much as to disarmament - are essential components of its deal and are to be fulfilled with equal rigour. *That* is the real basis for celebration next year of the half-century since the NPT entered into force.

In conclusion, I note that New Zealand associates itself with the group statements delivered on our behalf by the New Agenda Coalition, the De-alerting Group, and the Vienna Group of 10. We will be supplementing today's General Statement with more detailed remarks to be delivered during the forthcoming cluster debate. We also draw attention to New Zealand's national report which has been submitted as document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/10.

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