

14 March 2023

Country: New Zealand

Committee: UN GA:1 Disarmament and International Security

Topic: Preventing non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction

New Zealand is a strong supporter of disarmament, particularly of weapons which breach international humanitarian law and the laws of armed conflict covered by the Geneva and Hague Conventions.

New Zealand has a long history of opposition to nuclear weapons dating back to when the UN was formed in 1945, the same year nuclear weapons were used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. New Zealand joined the first Resolution of the first ever General Assembly, which voted for the elimination of nuclear weapons from national armaments.

Opposition to nuclear weapons and nuclear tests gained momentum in New Zealand throughout the 1960s and 1970s culminating in 1984 when the Government declared New Zealand 'nuclear-free'. This was enshrined in legislation in the 1987 New Zealand Nuclear-Free Zone Disarmament and Arms Control Act. Along with the other members of the Pacific Islands Forum, New Zealand is a member of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, established by the Treaty of Rarotonga in 1985.

We're a signatory to international treaties and conventions that work to limit the production, proliferation and use of inhumane conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

Our ongoing prioritisation of nuclear disarmament is a continuation of New Zealand's historical leadership role in this area, born out of the New Zealand public's horror at the use of the Pacific as a nuclear testing ground and their clear rejection of nuclear weapons as unlawful and illegitimate. It reflects our firm belief that the elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to address their risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences, and underpins our support for a broad range of initiatives – both in law and policy – determined to achieve this result.

New Zealand is also concerned about stockpiles of chemical weapons, the potential of biological weapons, and the use of many conventional weapons, including cluster munitions, landmines and small arms. While a range of

international treaties indicate a strong will to work toward disarmament, reducing global weapon stockpiles can be a frustratingly slow process.

We are looking forward to Increase ratifications and signatures of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and achieve a positive outcome at its 1st Meeting of States Parties with working with partner states and civil society, through ministerial and official counterparts as well as public events, to promote uptake of the TPNW while contributing substantively to positive outcomes from the 1st Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, including by supporting Pacific engagement, as well as achieving progress on nuclear legacy issues in the Pacific, supporting the work of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and building on the 1st meeting of parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga by a actively supporting the PIFS Task Force on nuclear legacy issues in the Pacific, engaging with the IAEA and relevant states to identify and achieve key outcomes.