



New Zealand Statement

International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference 2018

Delivered by

H.E. Ambassador Nicole Robertson



Madame President

Tena Kotou Katoa

Congratulations on assuming this year's Presidency. I assure you and your Vice-Presidents of New Zealand's full support in making this year's Conference a success.

Madame President,

Every year, the General Conference presents us with an important opportunity to reflect on, and set priorities for, the Agency's work to realise the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

This year, I wish to make four points through New Zealand's national statement:

1. To underscore the centrality of the multilateral system in the global world order, and the IAEA's role within this.
2. To set out New Zealand's views on the key non-proliferation challenges we are facing at this precise moment
3. To highlight New Zealand's views regarding the rights and obligations that come with the peaceful use of nuclear technology.
4. To make some brief comments on the Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

On the first issue, New Zealand is a long-standing advocate of the multilateral rules-based order, with particular focus on global rules on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Today there is much talk about the state of the global world order and whether we are experiencing a moment of fundamental historical change. It is too early to say how fundamental all of this may be – and indeed the future of multilateralism is in our hands. In New Zealand's view, support for multilateralism, global public goods and our cornerstone institutions, like the IAEA, is critical to maintaining the health and centrality of the global rules based order. To put this in very simple terms, support for the Agency, and the wider non-proliferation system, will be critical in shaping what our world will look like in the coming years.

So far, we are doing well. The IAEA is a successful organisation and we have a membership that shares common goals. Yes, there are disagreements – and no doubt some of these will be to the fore this week – but overall the Agency stands as an excellent example of what the multilateral



system can deliver when it works. This is something to appreciate – but we must not take it for granted. The counter-factual, in which the IAEA does not exist, is a scary proposition, not least for global peace and security.

This links well to my second point.

International concern over the situations we face with respect to both Iran and the DPRK has been underscored in every statement we have heard over the past three days. New Zealand fully shares these concerns.

With respect to Iran, New Zealand remains a firm supporter of the JCPOA, which we consider critical to reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East region and globally. All Member States have a stake in its success, not just for global security, but as an example of what committed multilateral action can achieve. We are disappointed with the decision of the US to withdraw from the deal and we welcome the ongoing determined commitment of the remaining signatories to the continued implementation of the agreement.

Against this backdrop, it is important for Iran to continue to fulfil its obligations under the deal and to refrain from any actions that place further unnecessary strain on the agreement. Timely and proactive cooperation by Iran remains fundamental to maintaining international confidence.

With respect to the DPRK, we fully share the view that the DPRK's nuclear programme threatens global security and poses a serious challenge to the international non-proliferation regime. New Zealand has welcomed the progress made in recent months towards reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and hope that this process will continue at Pyongyang summit. Notwithstanding the manifold challenges, we encourage all parties to build trust towards resolving long-standing security issues, and we will continue to do all we can to support efforts towards achieving an enduring peace. As part of this process, it is essential that the DPRK abide by its international obligations. We urge the DPRK to demonstrate its commitment to the goal of Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. We expect genuine concrete steps, including returning to compliance with the NPT, joining the CTBT and re-engaging with the IAEA to allow inspectors to return.

Our expectations of Iran and the DRPK underscore the importance of the wider safeguards system. We note once again that the CSA plus Additional Protocol is the gold standard of safeguards and we call on all states who have not yet concluded an Additional Protocol to do so. We also note that as technologies become more complex, the Agency will need to continue to find efficient and effective ways to support its safeguards work. In this we welcome the Secretariat's use of the State Level Concept and look forward to further updates as its approaches develop.

And now to my third point.



Much of the debate at this General Conference, and indeed for many General Conferences prior, has been grounded in the safe and secure use of nuclear technologies, that is, *how* we exercise our collective right to the peaceful use of nuclear technologies. For New Zealand this means seeking and providing assurances that we are all using nuclear technology safely and securely.

New Zealand recognises that nuclear power forms part of the existing or planned energy mix for a number of countries. As a country that has not chosen nuclear power for itself, New Zealand – and many of our Small Island Developing State neighbours in the Pacific - are nevertheless still susceptible to suffering damage from the nuclear decisions that others have made. We respect their right to make those decisions, but we note that nuclear materials do pose significant risk and the highest possible standards must be in place, nationally and internationally, to ensure safety and security

This is particularly the case if an accident took place during the maritime transport of nuclear material. We greatly value the dialogue between coastal and shipping states which has done a lot to build confidence and communication channels on this issue in recent years. New Zealand also strongly supports efforts to improve the international nuclear liability regime, including through INLEX, so that it addresses the concerns of states – particularly non-nuclear states – which might suffer damage as the result of nuclear accident.

Like nuclear safety, nuclear security is an issue that has transboundary implications. We are fully aware that nuclear security has been a difficult discussion amongst the membership. We are hopeful, however, that we are now finding a way through that focuses on the fact that we have strong shared interests in ensuring nuclear materials are securely managed. It is in all our interests to make the best use of the tools we have, including an integrated approach in the IAEA system.

My fourth point, Madame President, is on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. New Zealand was an active participant in the negotiation of this important Treaty in 2017. New Zealand signed last September last year and ratified on 31 July. Speaking in this room, I am fully aware of the views of those who argue that the IAEA is not the place to discuss the Treaty. Respectfully, this is not the case. Disarmament and non-proliferation were bound together in the grand bargain of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. Much as some would wish this was not so, we are on a dangerous road if we try to deny the links between the two or to claim that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in some way undermines the NPT, or has no relevance to our work here.

To the contrary, the new Treaty strengthens the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its cornerstone. First of all, it provides a legal framework for the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. Secondly, the TPNW strengthens the IAEA safeguards system based on the NPT. It reaffirms the safeguards standard enshrined in NPT Article III, obliges States which already have a higher standard in place to maintain it, and encourages all States to further raise their level of commitment in terms of safeguards.



Madame President, New Zealand's view remains that disarmament and non-proliferation should work in *partnership* and we call on all those present to reflect on how we can do better at this, not least through implementation of Article VI.

In closing Madame President let me once again thank Director General Amano and his team for their service. New Zealand is grateful for your contribution to the advancement of nuclear technology and for your contribution to global peace and security. We align ourselves with the comments of others on the importance of the work the DG is doing to strengthen the organisation, including with respect to gender, and we again stress the critical role the IAEA plays in the multilateral system.

I wish you all a productive General Conference.

Thank you.