



STATEMENT

BY

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**OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UN IN GENEVA AND TO OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN SWITZERLAND
ON BEHALF OF THE NEW AGENDA COALITION**

FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE

2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE

**OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS**

GENERAL DEBATE

30 APRIL 2012

VIENNA

Chairperson,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the seven members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC): Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden, and my own country South Africa. At the outset, the NAC wishes to congratulate you on your assumption of the position of Chair of the first Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2015 Review Cycle of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to assure you of the Coalition's full support and cooperation during your term.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential bedrock of the global security regime. As such, the NAC remains fully committed to the NPT and the fulfillment of its objective of achieving a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons. Accordingly, as a cross-regional group, we have worked tirelessly since our establishment towards the fulfillment of the NPT's objectives.

In so doing, the NAC recalls the founding agreement and the grand bargain struck by all State Parties to the NPT, where the nuclear-weapon States (NWS) committed to nuclear disarmament, in return for which the non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) undertook not to develop nuclear weapons. We also recall that in endorsing this agreement, all States Parties affirmed the inalienable right to pursue the peaceful development of research, production and use of nuclear energy.

Significant progress has been made to meet the nuclear non-proliferation objectives of the NPT, limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Whereas the non-proliferation measures have been strengthened over the years, the nuclear disarmament side of the NPT bargain has yet to be realised. Thus nuclear disarmament remains the *raison d'être* of the NAC.

This is aptly reflected in the founding NAC Joint Ministerial Declaration of 1998, which asserted that the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use or threat of use by NWS posed a continued threat to humanity. Accordingly, NAC Ministers maintained that the world could no longer remain complacent at the reluctance of the NWS to take the fundamental and requisite step, namely a clear commitment to the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capabilities. To this end, NAC Ministers called on the NWS to immediately start work on the practical steps required to attain nuclear disarmament. The sentiments expressed then are equally relevant today.

Chairperson,

There is only one guarantee for a safe and peaceful world and that is the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons irrespective of their type or where they are located. No nuclear weapon can ever be safe in any hands, whether state or non-state actor. As long as these weapons exist, the possibility of their use, whether by accident or design, will remain. Similarly, as long as some states continue to possess them, citing security reasons for doing so, others may aspire to acquire them.

The NAC therefore continues to reject any justification for the continued retention or presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. This is clearly incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Chairperson,

The Action Plan that emerged from the 2010 Review Conference was an important step to attain a world free of nuclear weapons, as it enabled us to get back on track after ten years of impasse. It was here that the NWS reaffirmed their commitment to unequivocally accomplish and accelerate progress towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, reaffirming the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000 to advance the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. Further, it also reemphasised the commitment to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to nuclear disarmament measures.

Whilst modest gains have been made, it is, however, clear that the threat posed by nuclear weapons endures and that the objectives of Article VI of the NPT are far from being met. Indeed, the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the threat of their proliferation contradict the very commitments made by States Parties under the NPT. The 2015 NPT Review Cycle must therefore decisively tackle these challenges.

The NPT needs to be fully implemented. Each Article is equally binding on the respective States Parties at all times and in all circumstances. Accordingly, the current challenges in respect of the Treaty must be met with a common purpose and concrete action, as the NPT's long-term success is dependent on the realisation of all its objectives. Selective approaches to the implementation of the NPT's provisions undermine the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and reinforce existing inequalities under the Treaty.

Chairperson,

The NAC recognises the initial steps that had been taken towards realizing the agreed actions contained in the 2010 Action Plan for a process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East. In particular, we welcome the appointment of the Under Secretary of State Jaako Laajava of Finland as the facilitator and the designation of Finland as the host government for the 2012 Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction to be attended by all States of the Middle East. We look forward to the successful convening of this important Conference, which is an essential element of the 2015 NPT Review Cycle. We further call on the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Depositary States of the NPT to continue to exert all their efforts to assist the facilitator in securing a successful conference. As mandated, the facilitator will also assist in implementation of follow-on steps agreed by the participating regional states in the 2012 Conference towards the full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and present a report to the 2015 Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee meetings. The NAC holds that the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995, remains valid until its full implementation.

Chairperson,

The NAC calls on all States Parties to spare no effort to achieve the universality of the NPT, and to desist from actions that can negatively affect prospects in this regard. We urge India, Israel and Pakistan to join the NPT promptly and without conditions. Moreover, we appeal to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to rescind its announced withdrawal from the NPT and to verifiably terminate its nuclear weapons programme.

Chairperson,

The NAC stands ready to fully and effectively engage with all States Parties at this PrepCom to ensure the success of the new review cycle leading towards the 2015 Review Conference. Looking ahead, all States Parties should work towards the construction of a legally-binding comprehensive framework of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Such a framework should include clearly defined benchmarks, timelines, and be backed by a strong system of verification. Given the threat posed and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences associated with the use of these instruments of mass annihilation, it is time for us to act now, for tomorrow may be too late

I thank you.