



IRELAND

General Debate

Statement by

Ambassador Tom Hanney

Head of Delegation

at the

2017 Preparatory Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-
Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

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PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN VIENNA
ROTENTURMSTRASSE 16-18, A1010 VIENNA
Telephone: 017154246 E-mail: vienna@dfa.ie

Thank you Mr Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on your role as Chair of this Preparatory Committee and to commend you and your team for the proactive manner in which you have prepared for this session. My Delegation assures you of our support for a constructive and productive meeting which contributes positively to the success of the Review Cycle. We look forward to working with you and with all delegations, to this end.

I wish to associate my remarks with those of the European Union, the New Agenda Coalition and the Vienna Group of 10.

My Delegation fully shares the view of the EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini, speaking in Washington recently, where she said that the NPT was more important now than at any time in history. We also support her analysis that the only way to achieve security for all our citizens is through progress on the mutually supporting commitments to disarmament and non-proliferation set out in this Treaty, to which we are all a party. All of the three pillars are of course inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing and we therefore welcome your intention to give equal weight and equal time to each in our agenda.

My Delegation is known to have strong views on our nuclear disarmament commitments. I wish to emphasise that we are equally committed to non-proliferation. Later this year, we will be pleased to become, together with Iceland, the Co-Chairs of the MTCR. We are already actively engaged in outreach and consultation to ensure that we can work to expand and deepen the influence of this important export control regime. We recognise the crucial role of ballistic missile technology in providing means of delivery for nuclear warheads and we condemn absolutely, without hesitation or qualification, all breaches of UN Security Council Resolutions on non-proliferation, all breaches of weapons prohibition treaty commitments and all testing that undermines the important

norm created by the CTBT. We are deeply concerned about the ballistic and nuclear testing by the DPRK, which represents a real threat to peace and security in the Korean Peninsula, and the entire North East Asia region. It is a flagrant and provocative violation of the DPRK's international obligations not to produce or test nuclear weapons and is also a major challenge to international efforts to advance global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This grave situation draws into sharp focus the urgent need for engagement on nuclear disarmament by all stakeholders.

My government has repeatedly called on the North Korean authorities to cease all nuclear testing and to re-engage with the Six Party Talks on the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, immediately and without pre-conditions. These events further highlight the urgency for the immediate entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as well as the importance of continuing to work for the universalisation of the NPT.

The great irony of nuclear technology is that the same human ingenuity that can devise weapons, with the potential to obliterate the planet and every living thing on it, has also devised positive applications which save and transform lives, including in our least developed nations. Ireland works to facilitate cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in the areas of health, safety, security and environmental protection, consistent with its obligations under the NPT and other international agreements. We strictly control the export of nuclear items to ensure that they are exported only to countries that meet international nuclear non-proliferation requirements. The IAEA's Peaceful Uses Initiative has a key role to play in leading the fight against cancer and other diseases. Ireland therefore made an extra-budgetary voluntary contribution to the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy, or PACT, in 2013, and our authorities are positively considering a further voluntary contribution this year. Here in Vienna, Ireland is active in the Vienna Group of 10, in coastal and shipping states cooperation, and

in ongoing discussions aimed at balancing the requirements of nuclear safety and nuclear security in its broadest sense.

Mr Chairman,

The original drafters of the Treaty knew that their work was not finished and that effective measures still needed to be elaborated on nuclear disarmament. This is clear, both from the historical record of the negotiations and from Article VI of the treaty itself, the impetus from which informs the work that my Delegation is undertaking at the United Nations in the negotiations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination. We believe that this ongoing work is complementary to and supportive of the NPT; let me be perfectly clear; we would not be engaged in it otherwise. We look forward to a positive and successful outcome. We also hope that many more States will join the over 130 States who have already engaged in the negotiations, with a view to the widest possible level of support.

However, the focus of our attention here in Vienna is on the NPT, where we have a significant and important agenda before us. One of the central functions of the Review Cycle, which we are commencing here today, is the opportunity to assess progress, on all three pillars. The Review Cycle is also important for the consensus Outcome Documents which it adopts and which carry the same level of obligation on us all as the Treaty itself. There has, unfortunately, been an emerging pattern in these Review Cycles, of setting out ambitious and constructive steps, followed by a period with limited progress and, where no Outcome Document has been possible, followed by agreement on another list of actions. The 13 Practical Steps and the 64 Actions in the 2010 Action Plan are all important and necessary but they have to become more than words on a page if they are to have real impact. Credibility requires that these actions be measured and assessed. In this regard, my Delegation, as Coordinator of the New Agenda

Coalition, is pleased to encourage delegations to support NAC Working Papers 9 and 13.

Mr Chairman,

In your consultations to prepare for this meeting, you have invited us to come here with suggestions for specific elements and language which we would like to see reflected in the final Outcome Document. In addition to the urgent questions of increased risk and how best to measure progress and ensure enhanced implementation of existing commitments, as set out in the NAC working papers, there are three other important issues which I would like to mention and which my delegation will also return to in later interventions.

My delegation will expect to see a recognition in the outcome of this Review Cycle of the devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, not just because this was already identified at the 2010 Rev Con and indeed was the driving force behind the NPT itself, but also because of the additional knowledge we have acquired in the meantime, including on the inadequacy of any humanitarian response, as set out so clearly by our colleagues in the ICRC and other important partners in the United Nations and in civil society.

In addition, Ireland has funded further research on the gendered impact of nuclear weapons, both in terms of the disproportionate effects of ionising radiation on women and girl children and the need for greater engagement of women in disarmament fora. We will present a Working Paper on this issue, which will also be the subject of a side-event, co-sponsored with Sweden, on 4 May.

We will also present, at a Reception, on 4 May, a new report, following collaboration with Chatham House, on Nuclear Disarmament and Cultural Heritage. We invite all delegations to join us at these events.

I would like to reiterate my delegation's support for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We have much to learn

from the positive experiences of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones and notably we marked earlier this year the fiftieth anniversary of the treaty of Tlatelolco. The use of weapons of mass destruction, be they chemical, biological or nuclear, with their indiscriminate impact on civilians, have no place anywhere in our world and their toxic presence lends nothing to already fragile, tense and complex regional relationships. We look forward to making progress on this important issue during the current Review Cycle. While we acknowledge the special responsibility of the Co-Convenors and the states of the region, we believe that, as NPT states parties who have made a commitment, we all have a role to play and a duty to offer whatever support we can.

Mr Chairman,

Vision, leadership and courage brought us the NPT:

the vision to see the appalling vista of a potential nuclear war and the need to avert it;

the leadership to press for a treaty that, with its three interlocking strands, has the capacity to deliver the best applications of nuclear technology, for example life-saving nuclear medicine, while protecting us from its life-threatening capacities; and the courage to commit ourselves to a rules-based system.

We need that same vision, leadership and courage now, more than ever. The NPT is a multilateral instrument. Multilateralism at its essence means all of us, working in concert; it means that the benefit for the many greatly outweighs the benefit for the few. It is the foundation for the United Nations and runs through its Charter, where we commit to take effective, collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and to refrain from the threat or use of force. We do well to recall these fundamental commitments, as we begin our work here.

Thank You.

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