



# IRELAND

Cluster 1

Statement by

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at the

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Thank you Mr Chairman,

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

As we commence this new Review Cycle, it is natural to take stock. Some of the most innovative steps in human history have emerged from times of great adversity and some of the most courageous actions, including actions on disarmament and indeed on the negotiation of this treaty itself, have been taken at times of intense international pressure. Indeed, sometimes it is only when we are confronted with the peril in which we have placed ourselves that we can generate the necessary political and public will to act. It is good to remind ourselves of this capacity for resilience and for creativity as we face the challenges of today. The NPT is one of the most innovative and successful treaties which the international system has created. It emerged from an era of fear but is founded on elements of trust, trust in our ability to turn back from the apparently inevitable spread of nuclear weapons, trust to use nuclear technology solely for peaceful means and trust to negotiate effective measures on nuclear disarmament.

**Over fifty years ago, the fear was very real but the negotiation process was still difficult. As a result, everything in this treaty is interconnected. Without the three pillars and in particular without Article VI, we would not have had an agreement on a treaty at all and without the commitments to a programme of action on disarmament, to a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and to an enhanced Review process, we would not have had agreement on its indefinite extension in 1995. So, as we approach this Treaty's fiftieth anniversary, now is not the time to attempt an a la carte approach. By this Treaty, and by all of these interconnected commitments, we are bound, to a shared vision, a shared objective and a shared responsibility. While the NPT is crucial to the non-proliferation architecture, it would be a mistake to view it solely as a non-proliferation instrument. It is more complex and even more significant than that. This is a dynamic**

**treaty with an inherent tension at its heart. This tension finds its source in the nuclear disarmament pillar, where further work was always envisaged.**

It is this further work on effective measures that my Delegation is engaged in at the United Nations, as we seek to negotiate a new legal instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination. We believe that the obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament applies to all states parties. Our work is therefore informed by our Article VI commitment but also by our learning from the three conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and on newer presentations since then by our civil society partners and leading authorities like the ICRC, UNIDIR and Chatham House, as well as the powerful testimonies of living witnesses with direct experience of nuclear weapons detonations. Gender and disarmament is also a horizontal priority for my delegation.

Like many States here, we have limited resources at our disposal, but we prioritise sponsorship funding to promote diverse participation in nuclear disarmament fora, including improved gender balance. Most recently, Ireland has funded important new research on the gendered impact of nuclear weapons, both in terms of impacts and empowerment issues, and we will present this research and associated Working Paper to this Prep Com. We will also present new research on the connection between nuclear disarmament and obligations to preserve cultural heritage. All of this expert research from scientists, medics, lawyers and others reinforces the need for urgent action. In our view, to not act, would be to renege on our responsibility, as an NPT state party, as a UN member state and as a responsible government.

We are also committed to all of the other steps identified as contributing to effective measures on nuclear disarmament, including the CTBT and negotiations on a fissile material treaty. We were pleased to host the CTBTO data workshops for a week in Dublin this time last year and we use every opportunity to press for the entry into force of this important treaty. **We condemn all breaches of the global norm on nuclear explosive testing. We fully support the establishment of verification measures for**

**nuclear disarmament. We are always interested in constructive proposals and are prepared to go outside our comfort zone to find good ideas.** At the UN First Committee last October, we co-sponsored each Resolution that, in our assessment, seemed to offer a positive contribution to nuclear disarmament, even those where we had some reservations on scope and inclusivity. We do not subscribe to the principle of the lowest common denominator and we look to States to set ambitious examples and high standards. **We believe that our policies and practices are compatible with, and reinforcing of, our NPT commitments and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.**

There is an excellent campaign slogan called “see something, say something”. Our approach to disarmament is “say something, do something” and we expect no less of others.

My delegation’s historic association with the NPT is well known. Ireland is consistent, across all platforms in our unwavering support for the NPT. **Our focus is on the weapon and the impact of the weapon, not on the actor or on the context. We endorse the former UNSG view that there are no right hands for the wrong weapons.** My Delegation believes that, given the increasing risks surrounding the existence and potential detonation of a nuclear weapon, either by accident, by miscalculation or through a deliberate act of terrorism or of war, it is time in our review of this treaty that we focus, in depth, and with greater specifics on our obligations, analyse how we measure up and see what needs to be done to ensure better implementation. We already apply this process to other weapons treaties and we should do no less when it comes to the most destructive weapon of them all. We have built in such assessment to other international commitments of global significance, such as the SDGs; it should not be beyond us here. We regret that on the 64 Actions set out in the 2010 Action Plan, progress has been limited, in particular on nuclear disarmament actions. We therefore encourage all delegations to examine the proposals in the NAC working papers on this issue and we hope that this idea can be elaborated further throughout

the review cycle with a view to the adoption of benchmarks at the 2020 Rev Con, **something which my Delegation referred to in our opening remarks at the 2012 Vienna Prep Com.**

Mr Chairman,

There remain an estimated 14,900 nuclear weapons in the world, the detonation of even a fraction of which would mean the destruction of our planet and catastrophe for our civilisation. These are such big numbers and such dramatic statements that sometimes they may seem too much, or even too implausible to comprehend. But the evidence exists, the evidence of science and of history. The continued reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines and the worrying decrease in the taboo around possible use is, regrettably, only too real also, as is the amount of resources being invested in nuclear weapons modernisation and the development of so-called tactical, more usable, nuclear weapons.

The fallacy of a limited and controlled nuclear exchange is one of the most dangerous to have re-emerged in recent debates and the review of this treaty provides us with an important opportunity to counter this false discourse and focus on the reality. The drafters of the NPT and the politicians who oversaw its origins were in no doubt of this **then and we should not be any less careful today. As President Kennedy said in 1963 - “all we have built, all we have worked for, would be destroyed in the first 24 hours.” But even by their very existence, nuclear weapons are a drain on humanity and threaten our other global goals, not just as a sword of Damocles, forever hanging over us but, as President Kennedy also noted, because of the “massive sums of money that could be better devoted to combating ignorance, poverty, and disease”.**

Instead, the world has need of a genuine focus on those commitments which can secure our future, commitments we made in the SDGs and the Climate and Migration Agreements, in UN Resolution 1325, in our obligation to protect human rights and cultural heritage and in every promise we have made to future generations, including

to our own children, and which, sadly, we undermine each day that we fail to address the risks these weapons pose.

Security concerns and the security environment have been a recurring theme in our discussions. But when we speak of security, especially when it comes to weapons which respect no boundaries and whose reverberating poisons would spread through the air to damage human, animal and plant life across continents, as well as polluting our water and soil, with the potential to cause famine and change our weather for a decade or more, it would be wise to take a step back, to adjust the perspective, from national, regional, international and to take a global view. What we need now is to rededicate ourselves to the object and purpose of the NPT and all that it stands for, which is a world order, founded not on fear of one another, but on faith in one another. To quote our former Foreign Minister Frank Aiken, speaking at the UN in 1957, “the world today stands in need of inspiration, of imaginative and magnanimous action which will transcend short-term calculation”.

To conclude Mr Chairman,

This treaty represents our better selves and has the capacity to continue to protect us; the best way to ensure its enduring viability is to implement it fully. We look forward to working with all states parties to ensuring this through an effective Review process – one where we move forward, not backward and one in which the security of humanity is assured through genuine progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, as first envisaged in the NPT.

Thank you.