

IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE 2016
NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT

Mr President

At the outset, let me offer New Zealand's congratulations to you on the assumption of the Presidency of this year's General Conference. I assure you and your Vice-Presidents of New Zealand's full cooperation in our collective work to make this conference a success.

We are pleased to welcome the newest members of the IAEA - St Lucia, Gambia and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

This General Conference celebrates the 60th anniversary of the IAEA. We congratulate the Agency on six decades of significant commitment and contribution to international peace, security and development. As we look to the future New Zealand believes the Agency has an active and important part to play in assisting member states to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals using nuclear science and technology to improve food security, human and animal health and water management. We look forward to our continued partnership with the Agency.

On this 60th anniversary, we would also like to take the opportunity to welcome the much needed work that is underway to promote gender equality in the Agency, including efforts to increase the representation of women in the professional categories and management positions.

Mr President

New Zealand remains dedicated to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, a world in which all nuclear and radioactive material is safe and secure, and we will continue efforts – both traditional and innovative – to realise this goal. New Zealand was deeply disappointed at the failure of last year's NPT Review Conference and remains disappointed, too, that it has not yet proved possible to convene a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We hope that despite the difficulties, efforts will continue towards fulfilling the objectives of the NPT's 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

New Zealand remains firmly of the view that the imperative to achieve nuclear disarmament is relevant to our work here and we look forward to working with others on reinvigorated efforts towards nuclear disarmament in line with the long standing commitments in the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. At the same time, we recognise the central role of the IAEA in advancing the other two pillars of the NPT – non-proliferation and peaceful uses – and will continue to focus our engagement in this forum on making progress on these issues.

Mr President

We recognise the commendable efforts of the Agency in non-power applications. The recent visit to New Zealand by Director General Amano provided an excellent opportunity to highlight the ground breaking and innovative work the Agency does in this area.

New Zealand works closely with the Agency in a range of peaceful use activities. The IAEA works with New Zealand's Institute for Plant and Food Research on using the sterile insect technique against various types of moths, and with New Zealand universities on food traceability and authenticity, as well as the prevention of chronic diseases. New Zealand has also supported the IAEA Ocean Acidification Centre in Monaco, which uses nuclear techniques to study biological processes affected by pollution of the world's oceans. We are also pleased to support the IAEA's ReNUAL project to modernise the Nuclear Applications Laboratories in Seibersdorf, to which we contributed Euro 50,000 this year.

Mr President

Although New Zealand has chosen not to use nuclear energy to generate electricity, we are still vulnerable to damage caused by a nuclear accident elsewhere. This is particularly the case if an accident were to occur during the maritime transport of nuclear material. We therefore emphasise that all countries developing and using nuclear energy must apply the highest standards of safeguards, safety and security through all stages of the fuel cycle, including waste management and transport. In this regard we value the dialogue between coastal and shipping states, the voluntary guidelines on government-to-government communications developed by participating coastal and shipping states, and initiatives such as table top exercises to test such guidelines.

New Zealand remains committed to ensuring that shipments are conducted in accordance with the highest possible safety and security conditions, within a well-defined framework, including effective emergency preparedness and response systems. We are engaged in 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 an accident involving nuclear material, including a maritime transport incident.

Mr President

Like nuclear safety, nuclear security is an issue of global importance and New Zealand considers the Agency's work on nuclear security to be indispensable. This year sees a particular focus on nuclear security with the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security being hosted by the IAEA in December. New Zealand is committed to achieving an ambitious and forward looking outcome from this conference which underscores the importance of the Agency's leadership and central role in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and in coordinating international activities in the field of nuclear security.

New Zealand has contributed regularly to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund, and since 2014 has donated \$286,000. We will continue to support the Agency's work on nuclear security.

We also contribute to a range of voluntary nuclear security initiatives. We were pleased to be a major sponsor of exercise Kangaroo Harbour, hosted in Sydney in May this year under the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. We are also pleased to continue our collaboration with the US Department of Energy and the World Institute of Nuclear Security.

Last November, New Zealand was pleased to become the 44th country to host a voluntary International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission to review national nuclear security practices in New Zealand. While New Zealand has only very small holdings of nuclear material this request for a mission demonstrates the importance New Zealand attaches to nuclear security. The IPPAS team identified successful practices in nuclear security both at the national level and within visited facilities, as well as providing some useful advice. We are currently working to implement recommendations made and plan to invite a follow-up mission. We encourage other states to consider hosting such missions as a useful means to strengthen national nuclear security regimes.

New Zealand also hosted a Proliferation Security Initiative exercise – Exercise Maru 2015 last November. Over 130 participants from 21 countries attended the exercise, which was designed with our own Asia Pacific region in mind. The exercise focused on steps that countries in our region, including those with limited resources and capacity, can take to intercept weapons of mass destruction and their components.

This year, we enacted the Radiation Safety Act 2016 in March, completely updating our legislative framework dealing with the safety and security of nuclear and radioactive material.

New Zealand was pleased to ratify two important nuclear security conventions this year; the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We welcomed the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Protection of Nuclear Material in May 2016 and look forward to working with other states parties on the implementation of these important conventions.

Mr President

The integrity of IAEA verification activities is fundamental to assuring us that nuclear activities are indeed undertaken purely for peaceful purposes.

New Zealand commends the efforts of all parties on the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. All member states have a stake in the faithful implementation of the JCPOA, which strengthens the international non-proliferation regime and makes an important contribution to regional peace and security. We are grateful to the Agency for its continued work on this challenging task, and encourage Iran to maintain the good progress made to date in order to build trust with the international community.

The international non-proliferation regime, however, continues to face some serious challenges. New Zealand unequivocally condemns the DPRK's underground nuclear test on 9 September. This latest nuclear test, the second this year, is highly provocative and deeply concerning. North Korea's repeated nuclear tests are an affront to the international community's commitment, through the CTBT and the ongoing moratoria against testing, to end the era of nuclear tests, as well as blatant violations of resolutions of this Council and of the DPRK's commitments under the UN Charter. A strong international norm against testing has been created by the CTBT. That norm is being complied

with by all states except the DPRK. The DPRK continues to seriously undermine the international non-proliferation regime and is a dangerous affront both to regional security and the international community. We are committed to working with other members of the UN Security Council and our regional partners to ensure the DPRK understands that these actions are unacceptable to the international community. New Zealand calls on the DPRK to abandon its nuclear and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

New Zealand reinforces the calls of the international community for the Syrian Arab Republic to urgently comply with its Safeguards Agreement and to provide the IAEA with the access and information needed to provide credible assurances that Syria's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful in nature.

Mr President

New Zealand is committed to achieving a constructive outcome on the range of complex and important issues on the agenda of this 60th General Conference and we look forward to working with all member states of the IAEA to achieve our shared objectives in nuclear safety, security, safeguards and peaceful uses.

Thank you.

