

IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE 2014
NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT

Mr Vice-President

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

New Zealand also welcomes the ever increasing membership of the IAEA, which sends a clear signal that the Agency's work continues to be valued as relevant and important by the international community. We congratulate the newest members of the IAEA, including our own Pacific neighbour the Republic of Vanuatu, and look forward to working with them all on issues of common interest.

Mr Vice-President

This 58th meeting of the IAEA General Conference is the last before the 2015 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. There has been much speculation about the prospects for that Conference with no shortage of commentators predicting an outcome that it is at best weak, and at worst non-existent.

While we accept that the 2015 NPT Review Conference will be challenging, New Zealand believes that its fate has not yet been determined but remains in the hands of the states party to the Treaty. To be successful, the Conference – like the NPT itself – will require evidence that we are making satisfactory strides forward on all three of its fundamental elements.

New Zealand is dedicated to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and we continue to encourage all efforts – both traditional and innovative – to achieve this goal. We are very pleased, for example, that the next conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons will take place here in Vienna in December and look forward to participating in what we expect will be another lively discussion on this very important issue.

We are firmly of the view that the imperative to achieve nuclear disarmament is relevant to our work here, not least given the IAEA Statute's requirement that the Agency conduct its activities in conformity with policies of the United Nations furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament and in conformity with any international agreements entered into pursuant to such policies. 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 Vice-President

New Zealanders continue to contribute to and benefit from advances in nuclear science across fields as diverse as human health, water management and food quality. We are pleased to be playing a role in furthering these advances, including as current Chair of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for South and South East Asia, the Pacific and the

Far East, the annual general meeting of which New Zealand was proud to host in Wellington earlier this year.

New Zealand is also continuing its support for the Peaceful Uses Initiative. In 2014 we are pleased to have provided a financial contribution to enable and promote the integrated management and sustainable development of the shared groundwater resources in the Sahel, and – in our own region – to support an ocean acidification workshop with the US in the margins of the Small Island Developing States Conference held in Samoa last month. In light of the PUI's success we would welcome a decision by the US to extend it for a further five years.

Mr Vice-President

New Zealand does not intend to utilise nuclear energy to generate electricity but we recognise that nuclear power forms part of the existing or planned energy mix for a number of countries. We emphasise that all countries developing and using nuclear energy must apply the highest standards of safeguards, safety and security through all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle, including transport and waste management.

Even though New Zealand has not chosen nuclear power for itself, we are still susceptible to suffering damage as a result of a nuclear accident elsewhere, particularly were one to occur during the maritime transport of nuclear material near our waters. New Zealand was pleased with the adoption in September 2013 of voluntary best practice guidelines for systematic, timely and confidential communication between the governments of shipping and coastal states, which built on years of informal consultations between interested states under the auspices of the IAEA. We welcome the implementation of these guidelines by a number of states in advance of shipments made this year and look forward to their fuller and further implementation in the future.

New Zealand also remains engaged in efforts to improve the international nuclear liability regime so that it addresses the concerns of states which might suffer damage as a result of an accident involving nuclear material, including a maritime transport accident. Through our constructive engagement with interested partners we are focused on ensuring that the concerns of coastal states – and of non-nuclear coastal states in particular – are taken into account and addressed as part of these efforts. New Zealand was pleased to note INLEX's recommendation that nuclear power countries ratifying the Convention on Supplementary Compensation should extend coverage to victims in non-nuclear non-contracting parties - we look forward to the promotion and implementation of this recommendation.

Mr Vice-President

Like nuclear safety, New Zealand considers the Agency's work on nuclear security to be indispensable. We continue to contribute regularly to the Nuclear Security Fund, including NZ\$150,000 in 2014, and look forward to hosting an International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission in 2015. New Zealand's support for the central role of the Agency in strengthening the global nuclear security framework complements our active participation in the Nuclear Security Summit and in a range of voluntary initiatives, including the G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Mr Vice-President

New Zealand is committed to helping prevent the spread of nuclear weapons through the implementation of safeguards under the NPT. Fundamental to this objective, and to the assurances New Zealand seeks that nuclear activities undertaken by states are solely for peaceful purposes, is the continued integrity of the IAEA's verification activities.

We welcome the IAEA Secretariat's Supplementary Report on the State Level Concept, which has further increased New Zealand's confidence in the Agency's implementation of its verification mandate. As the global nuclear landscape continues to change and verification challenges increase, this concept provides a valuable tool for customising safeguards to a specific environment, taking into account broader information about a state's nuclear programme beyond traditional accounting and inspections but not involving any additional rights or obligations beyond those already agreed to by the state.

New Zealand urges those States remaining outside the NPT safeguards system to remedy this situation as a matter of priority. We also encourage all countries that have not yet done so to urgently conclude and bring into force an Additional Protocol, which in our view forms the contemporary NPT verification standard and should always feature as a condition of new supply arrangements.

At the same time we are continuing our efforts to ensure strengthened safeguards in New Zealand and are pleased to have adopted the modified Small Quantities Protocol to our Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement earlier this year. We are grateful to the IAEA for its ongoing support as we move through adoption of the modified SQP to its implementation.

Mr Vice-President

The international non-proliferation regime continues to face a number of complex compliance challenges.

New Zealand has welcomed the progress made by Iran over the last twelve months in implementing the Framework for Cooperation with the IAEA and the Joint Plan of Action with the E3+3. We are also pleased to have provided financial support to the Agency's implementation of relevant aspects of the Joint Plan of Action and its extension, and we remain hopeful that a comprehensive agreement can be reached between Iran and the E3+3 by the 24 November deadline. New Zealand remains concerned, however, about the slow progress towards resolving the outstanding issues relating to possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme and urges Iran to meet all its obligations under resolutions of the UN Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors.

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.

New Zealand also calls on North Korea to abandon its nuclear programme, which it continues in breach of both Security Council and IAEA Board resolutions, and which represents a significant threat to peace and security in our region.

Mr Vice-President

New Zealand is deeply disappointed that, despite the concerted efforts of many, it has not been possible to convene a Conference on the establishment of a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East. The agreement to convene this conference was a core element of the consensus outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and we regret that the failure to do so will increase the challenges facing the next NPT Review Conference in 2105.

Mr Vice-President

New Zealand is committed to achieving a constructive outcome on the broad range of complex and important issues on the agenda of this Conference. 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.