



**Statement by H.E. Amb. Juan Sandoval Mendiola
On behalf of the New Agenda Coalition at the
First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly 72nd Session
General Debate**

October 2, 2017

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Mr. Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) members: Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country Mexico.
2. We warmly welcome your appointment as Chair of this year's First Committee and assure you of the full support and cooperation of the NAC over the coming weeks.
3. As we have done for several years, the New Agenda Coalition will present a draft resolution to this Committee which will be introduced during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

4. As a cross-regional grouping, the NAC works actively for concrete progress on nuclear disarmament. Achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons remains the NAC's primary goal.
5. Throughout the past 19 years, the NAC has advocated for the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures and the fulfilment of obligations and commitments within the framework of the NPT. Although some progress has been achieved over this period it is far from sufficient, and we are deeply concerned that new challenges in international security continue to be cited as justifications for slow progress. For the NAC, the global security environment is not an excuse for inaction – rather it reinforces the need for urgency. What is lacking is not favourable conditions, but political will and determination.
6. Urgency is also demanded as a result of our increased knowledge of the growing risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences, including their strong gendered impact, of a nuclear weapon detonation. Given the scale of devastation that nuclear weapons are designed to inflict and the fact that their consequences cannot be constrained within borders, the continued reliance upon them in security doctrines and concepts is indefensible and fosters proliferation.

Mr. Chairperson,

7. Nuclear disarmament is not only a moral imperative but also an international legal obligation. In spite of the growing international consensus regarding the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons, an estimated 15,000 nuclear devices still exist, and nuclear weapons remain at the heart of the security doctrines of some. Far from strengthening international peace and security, this state of affairs serves to weaken it, aggravating international tensions and conflict, and jeopardizing the collective well-being of all States and peoples, as well as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
8. Indeed, in a world where the basic human needs of billions are not being met the growing spending on nuclear weapons is both unacceptable and unsustainable. The allocation of vast resources to retain and modernize nuclear weapons is at odds with international aspirations to development, as expressed by world leaders at the turn of the century. Rather than squandering resources on nuclear weapons, governments should direct much-needed resources towards socio-economic development.

Mr. Chairperson,

9. The Action Plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference provided an important opportunity to put the process towards a nuclear-weapon-free world back on track. The nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, and committed to accelerating progress in this regard. The 2010 Action Plan reaffirmed the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, including the 13 practical steps, to advance the implementation of Article VI of the NPT.
10. The New Agenda Coalition still looks forward to the implementation by the nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear disarmament commitments, both qualitative and quantitative, in a manner that enables States parties to regularly monitor progress, including through a standard detailed reporting format. This will enhance confidence and trust not only among nuclear-weapon States but also between nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States, thus contributing to sustainable nuclear disarmament.
11. The implementation of the NPT's Article VI is a legal obligation binding on all States Parties to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under effective international control. On this basis, the NAC welcomes the adoption on 7 July 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, negotiated by the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination pursuant to resolution 71/258 of 23 December 2016.
12. It is fundamental to bear in mind that the NPT was adopted and indefinitely extended on the basis of a 'grand bargain': nuclear-weapon States legally committed themselves to pursuing and achieving nuclear disarmament, in return for which non-nuclear weapon States legally committed themselves not to develop nuclear weapons. The presumption of indefinite possession of nuclear weapons runs counter to the object and purpose of the NPT. The NAC shares a firm commitment to this instrument, which is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. While a Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons is an effective legal measure contributing to the implementation of Article VI, additional measures are still needed in order to fully implement it. We must uphold and preserve the NPT, and the best way to protect the NPT is to implement it.

13. The current review cycle of the Treaty which began in May 2017 presents an opportunity for the States Parties to undertake comprehensive review and assessment of the current status of the Treaty, the implementation of previous obligations and commitments within its framework, and the challenges facing its full implementation.
14. It is now time that the international community translate words into concrete action backed by clear and agreed upon benchmarks and timelines. Bearing in mind the special responsibility that lies with the nuclear-weapon States, the NAC believes that these States should not only implement their existing commitments, but should also strive to build further on them in order to accelerate fulfilment of their obligations under the Treaty.

Mr. Chairperson,

15. Over the years, significant progress has been made on nuclear non-proliferation objectives, limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, concerns about vertical proliferation keep growing. Nuclear disarmament has yet to be realised.
16. Given that almost five decades have passed since the entry into force of the NPT, the status quo on nuclear disarmament continues to be unacceptable. The NAC believes it is time for States to deliver upon their commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons in line with the NPT obligations, to safeguard future generations from the danger arising from the use of nuclear weapons. This is the only way to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and this aim must guide all future efforts.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.