



**Statement by Ambassador Deborah Geels
Ambassador and Permanent Representative to
the United Nations and other international
agencies in Geneva**

General Exchange of Views

**Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
Third Meeting of States Parties**

4 March 2025

On behalf of New Zealand, I take this opportunity to thank you, President Rakhmetullin, for your efforts toward this Third Meeting of States Parties.

We are joined this week by representatives from all parts of the globe, including members of communities affected by the use and testing of nuclear weapons. I start by acknowledging them and their experiences. We welcome them and their support for the Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons objectives.

I also want to acknowledge and welcome those joining us from the ICRC, as well as ICAN and other Civil Society Organisations. We commend the partnership of States, international organisations and civil society that has been a hallmark of the success of our Treaty. I also humbly acknowledge hibakusha who are present with us, alongside offering New Zealand's congratulations to Nihon Hidankyo on their enduring work and Noble Peace Prize.

And, finally, I acknowledge the Observer States participating this week. Your constructive engagement is welcome and appreciated.

Mr President,

This year marks 80 years since nuclear weapons were first tested in the Alamogordo desert, and then detonated over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with devastating consequences. As we recall the legacy of those weapons, and of thousands of subsequent nuclear test explosions, we should also be troubled by recent developments that are elevating the risk of further nuclear weapons use.

Regrettably, nuclear disarmament efforts have stalled. In fact, nuclear arsenals, which never stopped being modernised, are being expanded again, at the cost of trillions of dollars, and which also raise the invidious prospect of a resumption of nuclear testing.

Globally we are on a dangerous trajectory.

Tensions between nuclear-armed states and nuclear risk are rising, and no region is immune – even the South Pacific. Nuclear-Weapon States, as well as their allies under extended nuclear security guarantees, continue to increase the role and prominence of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines, which make it harder to reverse the downward nuclear spiral through disarmament efforts.

In the face of such challenges, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a vital agreement, one that offers an alternative to a world in which nuclear weapons are to hang perpetually as a Damoclean Sword over humanity – or worse. The TPNW stems fundamentally from recognition of the human suffering that would arise from the further use of nuclear weapons, and that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought.

The TPNW strengthens the norm against the use of nuclear weapons by comprehensively banning nuclear weapons for its State Parties. It unfurls a clear standard and thus marks a pathway toward nuclear abolition. So, it is essential that we as State Parties use this Meeting to reaffirm our support for the Treaty and continue to give practical effect to our collective commitment to implementing it.

New Zealand is pleased to welcome new States Parties: Indonesia, Sao Tome and Principe, the Solomon Islands, and Sierra Leone. The addition of our new members underlines the Treaty's broadening support, and we encourage ratification of the Treaty by further States as important steps toward achieving a nuclear weapon-free world. New Zealand urges all countries that are not yet party to sign and ratify it at the earliest opportunity.

New Zealand was also heartened late last year by the support we received for UN First Committee Resolution on *Nuclear War Effects and Scientific Research*. In pushing for this resolution, New Zealand and Ireland were responding to the clear need identified by the TPNW's Scientific Advisory Group, among other experts in the scientific domain, to publicly establish an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the impacts of a nuclear war. Encouragingly, the support this resolution received highlighted the broad support that exists for constructive dialogue and progress on nuclear disarmament, including among States that rely currently on nuclear weapons for their security.

Mr President,

It has been more than two years since TPNW States Parties first met in Vienna to start work on implementing the Treaty. Since then we have,

together, made tangible progress on our ambitions for its implementation. New Zealand has co-chaired the verification work-stream. New Zealand thanks our successive co-chairs, Mexico and Malaysia, for their close collaboration with us as we discharged this responsibility. Nuclear disarmament verification is a large and complex task. Nevertheless, we hope that, through our Article 4 work, we have helped to progress how it will apply in the context of this Treaty. Along with Malaysia we will de-brief the Meeting of States Parties on this work later this week.

New Zealand is deeply appreciative of the work of the coordination committee and other participating States Parties. In this regard, the work stream on Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation has special importance for the Pacific, and I would like to take this opportunity to commend Kiribati and Kazakhstan for their efforts and continued ambition. New Zealand will continue to constructively and actively engage in those efforts, and we encourage other State Parties to do so too.

Mr President,

In closing, I acknowledge and commend the collaboration of States, international organisations and civil society that underpins the success of our Treaty. New Zealand, alongside so many of you, remains determined and committed to ensuring nuclear weapons are consigned to history once and for all. This is certainly a slow business. But our Treaty is a brightening beacon at a time when dark clouds have gathered for international efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Thank you.