



# IRELAND

Statement by

Ms Jackie O'Halloran

Director, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

FIRST COMMITTEE

72<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

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*Check against delivery*

PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
885 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017 TELEPHONE 212 421-6934 FAX 212 752-4726  
[newyorkpmun@dfa.ie](mailto:newyorkpmun@dfa.ie)

Thank you Mr Chairman,

I wish to align myself with the Statement made by the European Union and also with the Statement made by Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Mr Chairman

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize last week to the International Campaign to abolish Nuclear Weapons reminds us of the important and urgency of our work in this Committee. The Nobel Committee, in their statement awarding the prize, recognized that “We live in a world where the risk of nuclear weapons being used is greater than it has been for a long time. Some States are modernizing their nuclear arsenals, and there is a real danger that more countries will try to procure nuclear weapons, as exemplified by North Korea”.

The challenges we face today in Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation are existential and it is not an exaggeration to say that, once again, nuclear weapons are threatening the very existence of humanity, and at the very least the attainment of many of our most cherished global goals. Ireland welcomes

the Statements by the United Nations Secretary General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs which link the work in this Committee to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to a peaceful, more secure world for all.

Mr Chairman

The situation in the Korean peninsula has, unthinkably, brought the possibility of nuclear war back to the world stage. Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Simon Coveney TD has condemned the illegal and dangerous nuclear and ballistic missile testing by the DPRK unreservedly and urged the resumption of diplomatic engagement so that a peaceful resolution leading to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula can come about. The entry into force of the CTBT is now more urgent than ever and we call on all remaining Annex 2 States, in line with UNSCR 2310 to sign and ratify the Treaty so that the international norm against nuclear testing can become legally binding also.

Ireland also notes with concern that the norm against threats of use of these appalling weapons has been steadily eroding in recent years, not only with regard to developments on the Korean peninsula but also in other contexts.

Almost fifty years from the entry into force of the NPT, and twenty one from the adoption of the CTBT, this is not what humanity should be confronted with.

Mr Chairman

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which Ireland has long been associated with, and to which we are deeply committed, remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It has achieved substantial progress in the now almost fifty years since it entered into force in restraining proliferation of these weapons and in governing the peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy.

Regrettably, there has not been the same level of success in implementing the NPT's Disarmament pillar or the Commitments undertaken by the Nuclear Weapons States in accordance with the 2010 Action Plan and outcomes of previous review conferences. Ireland fully supports all the individual elements which proponents of the "progressive" or "step by step" approach to the NPT's commitments have put forward, and we are prepared to work constructively towards the achievement of these measures. In particular, in view of the current tense international security situation, we would welcome progress on

de-alerting as an important element in risk reduction with regard to the safety of these weapons. We also welcome initiatives on transparency and on the further development of nuclear disarmament verification mechanisms. I would like to mention the paper introduced by the NAC to the May Preparatory Committee on the development of benchmarks for assessment of implementation of NPT commitments as another initiative on which all of us could usefully work together.

Ireland views the NPT from a global perspective and has worked hard within this Review Cycle to broaden our consideration of its implementation. At this year's Preparatory Committee Ireland introduced the first of a series of papers which show the linkages between the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and other high level goals including sustainable development, gender equality, climate change and Cultural Heritage.

Nuclear Disarmament, the Missing Link in Multilateralism, developed by Chatham House was the first overview in this series. We also presented to the Prep Com a working paper based on the UNIDIR research paper on Gender, Development and Nuclear Weapons to the NPT Preparatory Committee.

The findings of the UNIDIR paper should not surprise anyone who looks around this hall today. Women are vastly underrepresented in Nuclear Disarmament forums, far more than in any comparable international bodies and we welcome the Chairman's factual summary from the NPT prep com which encourages States Parties to the NPT to work to improve the situation.

Another relevant question for our debate on Nuclear Weapons is the gendered impact of ionising radiation. Scientific Research findings on the strongly disproportionate gendered impact of ionising radiation between women and men have been available to States for some time now. It is our view that this is an important scientific facts deserving of more attention in our consideration of nuclear weapons. If we needed one further argument supporting the cause of nuclear weapons abolition, this surely should provide it.

At this First committee we will launch, with Chatham House, another element in this series of working papers, the revised and now peer reviewed version of their paper on Nuclear Weapons and Cultural Heritage. We look forward to further engagement on this matter at the next NPT preparatory Committee in Geneva.

We are also particularly concerned that work on the Middle East Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their delivery systems should regain momentum, with the involvement of all stakeholders from the region. We have been pleased to support a Civil Society event at this First Committee with BASIC and civil society actors from the region. We look forward to continuing our engagement on this question which is so important for a productive outcome to the 2020 NPT Review Cycle. We would welcome hearing from the Co-Convenors their plans for regaining momentum on this essential aspect of the NPT as we move towards the 2020 Review Conference.

Mr Chairman

Ireland is proud to have played a leadership role, in line with our historic role on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in the process which has now led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The treaty represents the successful outcome of the first multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in over 20 years.

Recognition of the catastrophic consequences of any nuclear weapons detonation, has been a driving force behind this international momentum to

prohibit nuclear weapons, which highlighted, firstly, that the risk of an accidental or deliberate detonation is far higher than had been previously thought, and secondly, that there is no global response capacity which could adequately address the aftermath of a nuclear weapons detonation.

Ireland has been guided throughout this process by the compelling requirement to implement Article VI of the NPT. The TPNW complements and does not undermine the NPT in any way. Article VI of the NPT expressly envisages a separate treaty on general and complete nuclear disarmament. We view the new Treaty as addressing this legal gap and as an effective measure to implement the NPT's Disarmament commitments. We urge States to sign and ratify it so that it can enter into force as soon as possible and to support the Resolution "Taking Forward Nuclear Disarmament" introduced by my Austrian and Mexican colleagues.

Mr Chairman

Ireland continues to be deeply committed to non-proliferation as well as to Disarmament, recognising the crucial role of export control regimes in contributing to a safer and more secure world and in underpinning essential



instruments such as the NPT. Ireland, with Iceland, will assume the Co-Chairmanship of the **Missile Technology Control Regime** next week. As Co-Chairs of the MTCR, Ireland has actively engaged in outreach and consultation to ensure that we can work to expand and deepen the influence of this important export control regime.

Ireland also regards the nuclear deal with Iran as a key achievement for non-proliferation and an example of what can be achieved through painstaking diplomacy and negotiation. We have been pleased to support implementation of the JCPOA and welcome the IAEA's findings regarding ongoing implementation. We also call on Iran to implement strictly all provisions of UNSC resolution 2231 and refrain from any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairman,

Ireland shares the view of many States here today at First Committee, that the use of weapons of mass destruction, with their indiscriminate impact on lives and livelihoods, on our fragile planet, on irreplaceable cultural heritage, has no place anywhere in our world and their toxic presence lends nothing to already

fragile, tense and complex regional relationships. Ireland's President recently noted that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons "*marks both a significant moment in history and a high point of international cooperation.*"

The progress finally reached in nuclear disarmament this year represents fresh hope in a time when all too many have lost their lives and livelihoods to violence and conflict, and a time when unbridled threats can all too freely flow.

It should serve to increase our determination to advance in *all* areas of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, where at times there can seem to be scant prospect for progress. My Delegation truly believes that during this First Committee, States can work together – focusing on the many aspirations and goals we share, instead of what divides us - towards a more secure and more peaceful world, for the benefit of all.

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