

Statement

Delivered by the New Zealand Delegation on behalf of H.E Mr. Tuiloma Neroni Slade,
Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Focal Point for the South
Pacific Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga)

Meeting of focal points for NWFZ Treaties and Mongolia
27 – 28 April 2009, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Excellencies,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Focal Point for the South Pacific Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), who regrets he was not able to join us on this occasion.

At the outset, allow me to convey our warmest congratulations on the entry into force on 21 March 2009 of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia – the first such zone to be established in the northern hemisphere, which not only does it encompass an area where nuclear weapons previously existed, it also borders two recognised nuclear powers. This is another important milestone in our collective efforts for a world free from nuclear weapons, and we look forward to working together with the States Parties to the Central Asia Treaty.

The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Treaty of Rarotonga) was the second such treaty established in the world. Its area of coverage ranges from the west coast of Australia to the Latin America nuclear free zone area to the east, and from just north of the equator to the Antarctica Treaty area. Together with the Treaty of Tlatelolco covering Latin America and the Treaty on Antarctica, SPNFZ covers contiguously a very significant portion of the globe. This coverage has been greatly increased by the Bangkok Treaty of December 1995 which created a nuclear-free-zone for South East Asia and the Pelindaba Treaty of April 1996 which created a similar zone for Africa.

Established in 1985, the Treaty of Rarotonga represents a unified approach by Forum countries in fulfilling their commitments under Article VII of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In addition to seeking from the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) a commitment not to conduct or to continue conducting nuclear tests in the South Pacific, Parties to SPNFZ renounced for themselves the manufacture, acquisition and possession of nuclear explosive devices and agreed to abide by safeguards in the provision of nuclear material and equipment. Parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga further

undertook to prevent the stationing of any nuclear explosive device on their territory and agreed not to dump radio-active waste and material at sea in the SPNFZ area.

The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty has been signed and ratified by all Forum members within the original geographical boundaries of the Treaty. We maintain close working relations with the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Palau, who joined the Pacific Islands Forum after the establishment of the Treaty, and we are hopeful that in time, they too will become Parties to the Treaty.

In respect of the three protocols to the Treaty, whilst all nuclear weapons states have signed the SPNFZ Protocols, not all have ratified them. The Protocols obligate nuclear weapons states to apply the Rarotonga Treaty to their territories in the region; to refrain from the use or threat of nuclear explosive devices against any Party; and not to test nuclear explosive devices in the Zone.

The Rarotonga Treaty is a significant achievement for the Pacific Islands Forum - it is one of the region's major contributions to strengthening global security and the international non-proliferation regime. Regional treaties like the SPNFZ Treaty provide valuable support and strength to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, including opportunities to enhance coordination and cooperation among Nuclear Weapons Free Zones in support of the process of nuclear disarmament, with the ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons.

The Parties to the Rarotonga Treaty work in close cooperation with our counterpart Treaties of Tlatelolco and Bangkok, and are supported by the bans imposed by the Antarctic Treaty and the Seabed Treaty. We look forward to the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty, establishing a nuclear weapons free zone for Africa, and welcome the continuing efforts of Mongolia to promote awareness of its nuclear-weapon-free status nationally and internationally.

We cannot underscore enough the importance of a successful 2010 Review Conference, which must deliver concrete results across each of the three pillars of the Treaty. Equally important is the continuing need to encourage all nuclear-weapons States to sign and ratify the CTBT as a matter of urgency, and support practical measures to end the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

On behalf of the States Parties to the Rarotonga Treaty, I wish you every success in your forthcoming deliberations, particularly as you prepare for the second conference of nuclear-weapons-free zones, as well as the Preparatory Committee meetings for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, towards achieving our shared vision of a nuclear weapons free world.

Thank you.

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