



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

UNITED NATIONS MEMBER STATES

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PSIDS Statement for the 10th Review Conference of The Parties to The Treaty on The Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Delivered by H.E. Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Dr. Pa'olelei Luteru, PSIDS Chair

Mr. President,

I present this statement on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States represented in New York.

At the outset, we congratulate H.E. Ambassador Gustavo Zlauvinen of Argentina on his assumption as President of the Tenth NPT Review Conference and pledge our support for this important work.

Mr. President,

The world and our Pacific region do not need nuclear weapons to survive. Nuclear weapons are nemesis to all, including those who possess it.

The Pacific region has suffered heavily from the humanitarian and environmental impacts of past nuclear testing. More than 300 nuclear tests were carried out in the Pacific from 1946 to 1996—in the atmosphere, underground, and underwater. Efforts by Pacific countries to stop this testing; to “promote the national security of each country in the region and the common security of all”; and so far as lies within the region’s power, to retain “the bounty and beauty of [its] land and sea”; were key factors in the adoption of the Treaty of Rarotonga in 1985 and the establishment of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone.

Some of our communities living close to ‘ground zero’ were relocated from their ancestral islands and restricted from using the ocean resources for their livelihoods. They also experienced an increase in medical problems, including cancers and birth defects. At the end of these nuclear tests, radioactive waste and machinery were either buried or dumped into the Pacific Ocean.

Today our people and communities continue to bear the burden of the transboundary and intergenerational devastation left behind by nuclear testing and radioactive contamination. On Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands where a series of nuclear blasts were carried out, a dome was built to contain 3.1 million cubic feet — or 35 Olympic-sized swimming pools of radioactive soil and debris, including lethal amounts of plutonium. Scientists have recently discovered that this dome or “coffin” is being eroded by rising sea levels and is cracking. There is serious

concern that the radioactive waste contained in the coffin could leak into the blue Pacific Ocean.

Mr. President,

While we welcome development partners on our terms, we however, note with increasing concern the ongoing geopolitical posturing in our region and urge for our national and collective interests to be placed at the forefront for a peaceful and secure Blue Pacific Continent. In this spirit, we are gravely concerned about the serious shortfalls in the implementation of Article VI of the NPT although the nuclear weapon states have spent billions of dollars on modernizing and maintaining their nuclear arsenals. This amount could have been better spent on helping victims of past use and testing of nuclear weapons, fighting the global pandemic of Covid-19 and on the sustainable development goals. It is high time for member states to reaffirm their commitments to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as set out in the NPT and to come to believe that the key to a safe, free and peaceful world lies not in more but rather in the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons underpinned by improved trust and respect between and among nations and peoples backed up by a solid verification regime.

Pacific SIDs believe that the risk of any nuclear weapon use is unacceptable and reducing the risk is an urgent humanitarian imperative. Stopping the further development of nuclear weapons and eliminating them altogether will free up much-needed global resources to assist our affected communities and islands. Despite the unfortunate recent behavior, following the invasion of Ukraine, and hinting at their possible use, there is hope. We note that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which a number of us have joined, entered into force on 22 January 2021 and the First Meeting of States Parties was held in Vienna, Austria from 21 June 2022 to 23 June 2022. We further attach great importance to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and call for the remaining Annex II states to sign and accede to the Treaty.

Mr. President,

At this review conference, we cannot afford to take a step back, especially for the victims of nuclear weapons. There is simply too much at stake. Therefore, we call upon the states parties to address both victim assistance and environmental remediation, and to foster international cooperation, and assistance within the context of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons at this review conference. It is imperative for humanity that references to helping victims and remediating contaminated environments are incorporated into the final outcome document.

We further urge all states parties to underscore the importance of disarmament and nonproliferation education. It is crucial for the world to hear the stories and reflections of the youth from the region especially those whose families have

suffered from nuclear weapons and testing.

Mr. President,

As custodians of the vast blue Pacific Ocean which sustains and shapes our rich and diverse cultures, identities, and livelihoods, we have a sacred duty to protect our ocean from contaminated wastewater. In this connection, we reaffirm the importance of ensuring international consultation, international law, and independent and verifiable scientific assessment with respect to the discharge of the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station into the Pacific Ocean. A discussion on this issue is necessary at this review conference.

Mr. President,

The Pacific community is united in the global goal for a peaceful and just world free of nuclear weapons. We urge all states parties to do everything within their power and means towards the accomplishment of this long-awaited dream and vision of the founding fathers of the United Nations.

We stand ready to fully engage with states parties to ensure a successful review conference for the good of all countries and peoples of the world.

Thank you.

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