



Towards internationally recognised rights for nuclear test victims

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Chair of New Zealand Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament

Thank you very much for the invitation to address this conference. I thank the conference organisers – *Moruroa and us* – and the support of the Ministry of Health and the Government of French Polynesia.

I acknowledge my international parliamentary counterparts – Senator Lyn Allison, Madame Unutea Hirshon, Senator Kerry Nettle, Mr Bob Sercombe, Madame Beatrice Vernaudon, Madame Dominique Voynet, and Madame Helene Luc.

I speak today on behalf of the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament as the New Zealand Chair and bring the best wishes of that organisation as we work together to both address the past impacts of nuclear testing and the future goal of halting the proliferation of these weapons of mass destruction.

New Zealand is proud of its heritage in the movement against nuclear weaponry.

In the 1960s we were part of the international movement that sparked the non-proliferation treaty.

In the 1970s we sent a frigate to Moruroa in protest at the atmospheric testing.

In the 1980s we suffered at the hands of the French agents with the terrorist bombing of Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior.

And I joined international parliamentarians here in the 1990s to bring an end to the testing a decade ago.



While proud of that tradition, we have our own issues from the legacy of nuclear testing.

In May 1957, 550 of our armed service personnel were exposed to the first Operation Grapple thermonuclear tests near Malden Island. Controversy has abounded in New Zealand around the impacts of those tests on those men and they, like others from so many countries, await an open, honest and frank disclosure of what they were exposed to and the impacts on them. It is clear that the radiation exposure has caused increased risks of some leukaemias to this group, yet officialdom continues to deny them support or compensation for their suffering.

I do not wish to overstate their plight in comparison to the thousands in these islands or the Marshalls who were far more exposed, in far greater number and who have suffered far more greatly.

I wish to support the convenors and organisers of this conference in their desire to get justice for the citizens concerned and indicate my strong support for the draft resolutions from this conference.

But I also wish to advance the agenda for a Nuclear Weapons Free Southern Hemisphere, because for all we may seek to fix the past harm done, our most important obligation is to ensure the errors are not repeated.

I want to draw this Conference's attention to the Non-Proliferation Treaty signed in 1967. For the 33 years to 2000, this Treaty successfully held the line in constraining the nuclear club to the original five.

The worry and concern is that in just five years, the club has almost doubled in size.

India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea and now Iran are knocking on the door or have entered the nuclear club. This proliferation just increases the risk of a nuclear war, a nuclear accident or of nuclear terrorism.

Thankfully, no power in the Southern Hemisphere has yet taken this path. In fact the nations of the Pacific, of Africa, and of South America have each progressed Nuclear Weapon Free Zones.

So my plea to this Conference is that we might use this anniversary of 40 years since France first detonated a nuclear weapon in these parts to trigger a very different reaction.

The ambition is to firstly merge the 5 Nuclear Weapon Free Zones of the Southern Hemisphere and then to promote to the Northern Hemisphere nuclear states an extension to include all international waters, so the lower half of the globe might be nuclear weapon free for good. It



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Contribution du Dr Nick SMITH

is a bold but achievable goal that New Zealand and more importantly, the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament, wishes to advance.

My thanks for the generous hospitality of your people. We share a South Pacific bond with you and your suffering. I look forward to reporting back to my Parliament in New Zealand on the latest reports on progress on these issues and commit ourselves to working with you to achieve justice for your people.