

Disarmament

HIGHLIGHTS

Labour will:

- Reinstatement of the Cabinet position of Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control
- Work through the UN towards a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction

Introduction

New Zealand can play a crucial leadership role in seizing the new opportunities emerging internationally to support ongoing progress towards a nuclear weapons-free world. By engaging in international disarmament and security debates, a Labour-led New Zealand government will participate in furthering the recognition of the catastrophic humanitarian, environmental, economic and political consequences of the use, and threat of use, of any nuclear weapon. It will elevate the portfolio back to Ministerial responsibility in order to indicate its importance and to engage with the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control and the NGO sector generally.

Labour will:

- Reinstatement of the Cabinet position of Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control
- Participate with vigour in multilateral fora to advance nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Legal enforceable mechanisms to increase security through disarmament

Legal, enforceable mechanisms are the preferred method for building a secure world. New Zealand should join with other countries to promote international legislative solutions with respect to the enforcement of treaties, including outlawing the development, stockpiling, threat of use and use of nuclear weapons through the International Criminal Court and the current UN negotiations for a nuclear weapons ban or convention. Civil society groups committed to a nuclear disarmament agenda will play an integral part in the development of a secure world.

Labour will:

- Actively support current negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Ban treaty and seek to include bans on any threat to use nuclear weapons, their deployment or transit, or participating in their financing
- Positively participate in next year's High-level Conference to advance a nuclear weapons convention that would phase out nuclear weapons altogether
- Move for the de-alerting of all nuclear weapons from high alert status
- Consult with the NGO sector to determine priorities and the efforts needed to achieve our aims.

Countries that already have domestic or regional nuclear weapons bans (e.g. New Zealand, Latin American countries) can engage with other countries either similarly located or similar in outlook, to examine ways of expanding networks of nuclear-free countries and their territorial waters. This could result in an expansion of existing regional agreements or the establishment of new nuclear-free regions particularly to areas of tension such as North East Asia and the Middle East. This is one way in which New Zealand's experience of nuclear-free legislation might be shared with other countries.

Labour is pleased at the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April 2013 and New Zealand's ratification of it along with a large number of UN Member States. While recognising the sovereign right of countries to defend themselves, the international regulation of the arms trade is essential if conflicts are not going to be initiated or exacerbated by the irresponsible trade in conventional weapons.

Labour will:

- Continue to promote the Arms Trade Treaty, in particular seeking Pacific Island states to join and ensure its effective enforcement, including through criminal law sanctions
- Seek the effective enforcement of other arms control treaties such as the bans on land mines, cluster munitions and chemical and biological weapons.

