

9 November 2012

Hon. Murray McCully  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington  
New Zealand

RE: Resignation - Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control

Dear Minister:

I am writing to inform you of my resignation from the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC), a position that I have held in my personal capacity since August 2007.

I am heading overseas to take up the position of advocacy director for the Arms Division of Human Rights Watch in Washington DC, where I will continue to work on a range of humanitarian disarmament challenges. This includes continued monitoring to ensure universal respect the treaties prohibiting antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions. We are also hoping to strengthen weak international rules on incendiary weapons, including white phosphorus, to better protect civilians. My most significant assignment, however, is to set up a civil society initiative to address the rapid development of fully autonomous weapons that could select and engage targets without human intervention. Such weapons are more colloquially known as “killer robots.”

During my time on PACDAC, New Zealand has taken leadership positions on several disarmament and arms control challenges, most notably by helping to spearhead the Oslo Process that resulted in the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is good to see New Zealand continue to dedicate resources towards the convention’s universalization and implementation, including as coordinator on national implementation measures. I welcome the similar level of commitment that we are making to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

New Zealand officials have been working hard to negotiate a strong international treaty to effectively regulate arms transfers and I hope that objective can be achieved soon. We have also indicated our willingness to work towards the abolition of nuclear weapons and I urge New Zealand to make a significant and substantive contribution on this at the meeting on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons that Norway is convening in March 2013.

New Zealand’s efforts to advance disarmament are not strictly the realm of government officials working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade or the New Zealand Defence Force, but involve a variety of efforts by an array of civil society actors. PACDAC has provided crucial financial support to New Zealand non-

governmental organizations and youth to study and advance disarmament objectives. The wealth of actions and resources produced as a result of those PACDAC grants is impressive.

In my time on PACDAC we have worked to actively promote the Peace and Disarmament Education Trust (PADET) and the Disarmament Education United Nations Implementation Fund (DEUNIF) as resources that could be more widely utilized. This includes through the creation of an identity (logo), a printed handout, and revised/simplified application forms. Over this time, the composition of the committee has become more diverse in terms of gender and indigenous representation.

Yet it has not been an entirely smooth ride. Since joining PACDAC I have rarely seen the International Security and Disarmament Division in Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade function with the level of staffing necessary to carry out its full range of responsibilities. I have seen officials struggle to obtain authorization to attend crucial disarmament meetings and to spend minimal amounts of resources on materials and activities in support of their work.

Our leadership on disarmament and arms control cannot be met without sufficiently resourced officials who can both ensure that we meet our existing obligations and also push forward on new initiatives. I am particularly concerned at the possibility that the position of New Zealand's dedicated disarmament ambassador in Geneva will be disestablished. This is not just another post in Geneva, but one that has seen our diplomats assume an essential and central role to advance disarmament around the world, from Oslo to Phnom Penh.

In my view, the past year since the decision was taken to disestablish the longstanding position of Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control has been particularly challenging for PACDAC. I regret that the members of PACDAC have not been able to meet with you as Minister of Foreign Affairs since you took on the responsibilities formerly included in the disarmament and arms control portfolio in December 2011. It is PACDAC's responsibilities to advise the minister on disarmament and arms control matters, as set out in the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987.

Under this law, the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control serves as the chair of PACDAC on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. A few months ago MFAT officials informed PACDAC that Hon. Chester Burrows has been assigned to chair PACDAC on your behalf, but to my knowledge this has not been formally announced. Burrows has yet to meet with PACDAC to explain how he will chair the committee without having responsibility for disarmament and arms control.

I appreciate the actions that you have taken with respect to nuclear non-proliferation initiatives and the support that you indicated for the Arms Trade Treaty during its negotiations this past July. But I hope it is possible to be even more visible and active in promoting a range of disarmament and arms control initiatives. It would be helpful if you could be more accessible on these issues to PACDAC members and civil

society representatives, and well as—from my own observations—to your own officials.

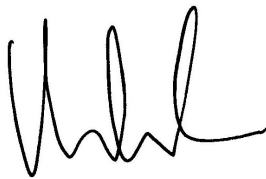
Over the long-run the ministerial position and portfolio on disarmament and arms control must be reinstated if New Zealand is to retain its respected leadership standing internationally in these matters. Over the past 25 years the seven Members of Parliament who served as Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control helped to ensure New Zealand's leadership position at relatively low cost, but with high benefits for our country, the Pacific region, and the world.

Having disarmament and arms control as a distinct ministerial portfolio has helped New Zealand to advance these issues by facilitating high-level engagement, bolstering our diplomatic outreach, and enabling productive and collaborative relations with civil society. The post has been a demonstrable indicator of New Zealand's status as an influential "Middle Power" and a reliable partner in global security, an important consideration as New Zealand seeks a seat on the United Nations Security Council in 2015-2016.

If New Zealand is seriously about assuming leadership roles internationally, it cannot afford to lose its profile and standing on disarmament and arms control.

It has been a privilege to served on PACDAC and I look forward to continuing my engagement with New Zealand to advance our common disarmament objectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Wareham', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mary Wareham

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