



**HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT  
VANUATU'S POSITION ON THE ISSUE OF THE NON-  
PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

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**Excellency, Speaker of Parliament of the Republic of Vanuatu;**

**Hon Deputy Prime Minister;**

**Hon Ministers;**

**Hon. Leader of Opposition;**

**Hon. Deputy Leader of Opposition;**

**Hon. Chairmen of Parliament Standing Committees;**

**Hon. Members of Parliament;**

**Dean and Members of the Diplomatic Corp;**

**Members of the general public present at the gallery today and those following live on radio, television and on social media.**

I bring you warm greetings. It gives me enormous privilege in delivering this statement in relation to Vanuatu's position on the issue of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Over the past few years, we witnessed a major shift not only in the national but the regional and international security landscape. Wars that were predicted to last for few days are to date, yet to end. The geopolitical landscape and influence in different regions of the globe have prompted blocs or alliances to form to counter the escalation of these foreign geopolitical influences.

Before gaining its independence to date, Vanuatu has been a strong advocate for the Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. This position has never shifted and to demonstrate our commitment to global peace and security, Vanuatu has ratified the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty or the Rarotonga Treaty in 1996, UN nuclear related Treaties such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2018, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 2005, the Treaty for the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 2016, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 2005 and the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013.

Considering the current arms and nuclear arms race and the use or the threat to use nuclear weapons by nuclear armed States, I call for greater collaboration by nuclear armed States in constructive dialogue for the restoration of global peace and security. We live and commute in a global village where we are interdependent, irrespective of whether we are great or small.

Vanuatu is committed to the Pacific Islands' Forum Leaders' commitment for the Pacific to be a 'Region of Peace'. This stance has also been exemplified through the MSG's Efate Declaration on Respect, Responsibility, Cooperation and Amity. Vanuatu unlike other countries in the region, sits in the rim of fire and as expressed by the PIF Leaders under the BOE Declaration, Climate Change is Vanuatu's existential threat. With the heightened devastating impacts of climate

change worldwide we should all take a step back and ponder as to whether an arms race should be prioritized over climate change resilience and adaptation. No country in the world today is or will be spared from the impacts of rising temperatures, bush or wild fires, Category 5 Cyclones, earthquakes or tsunamis, flooding, drought and ocean acidification. The journey to Armageddon has already begun and as responsible leaders it is high time for us to set our priorities right and strategize on how our people can journey into that uncertain future without sinking.

Recent nuclear tests in the Pacific is a demonstration of some nuclear armed States' disregard to international norms and commitment to international peace and security. While Vanuatu respects nuclear armed States in their use of nuclear weapons as a form of deterrence and the AUKUS Partners in their endeavor to develop nuclear powered submarines, I call for continued transparency and accountability.

As State Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it is crucial that the accountability of the nuclear armed States should be clearly identified, irrespective of political or philosophical stance. It is also essential that periodic reports are made available to all State Parties on the progress of their commitments.

The trust deficit and the crisis of confidence in nuclear disarmament objectives are confronting all countries. Vanuatu again calls for greater guarantees to be given to non-nuclear-weapon States, to reassure the international community through maximum transparency of their programs and that the nuclear weapon States are urged to respect their own commitments. It is essential that all non-nuclear-weapon States be provided with universal, unconditional, non-

discriminatory, and legally binding assurance, by all nuclear weapon States, against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Vanuatu reaffirms its commitment to the NPT as one of the cornerstones of the general and complete disarmament regime. Vanuatu reiterates its commitment to the principles of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and always reiterates the need for all States to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

To conclude, I call for transparency, accountability, constructive dialogue and periodic reporting by nuclear armed States. I seize this opportunity to reiterate that Climate Change should be the global priority security agenda and not arms or nuclear arms race. With the devastating impacts of climate change, the fate of any country in the world would depend on how it can be climate resilient; not on the number of nuclear weapons in one's possession.

**THANK YOU**