



## Press Release

### **New Zealand government must continue to champion ban on cluster bombs Disappointment at loss of the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control**

(Wellington, 19 December 2011): The coalition against cluster bombs looks forward to working productively with the government and all political parties in support of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, but is deeply disappointed that the long-standing and widely respected position of New Zealand's Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control has been scrapped.

“The loss of our dedicated Disarmament Minister is significant as this role has helped New Zealand to play a unique leadership role in the international movement to ban cluster bombs and in other crucial disarmament efforts,” said Mary Wareham, coordinator of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition (ANZCMC).

The post-election Cabinet listing of Ministerial portfolios announced on 12 December 2011 does not list a Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, but instead stated that New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Murray McCully, now “incorporates the responsibilities formerly included in the Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio.”

In a 13 December 2011 letter, the ANZCMC welcomed Hon. Murray McCully's assumption of responsibilities on disarmament and outlined its expectations for the New Zealand's government's engagement in the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. The NGO coalition expressed “deep disappointment” that the portfolio formerly represented by the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control has been incorporated into the overall responsibilities of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

“New Zealand needs active and constructive engagement by a dedicated Minister to advance the humanitarian disarmament agenda, including the ban on cluster bombs,” said Wareham. “We look forward to a productive relationship with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to working with all parties in support of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.”

Today (19 December), the Leader of the Opposition, David Shearer, announced the New Zealand Labour portfolios, including MP Maryan Street for the portfolio on disarmament and arms control. The New Zealand Green Party did not initially list a disarmament portfolio in its line-up announced 14 December, but in acknowledgement of NGO concerns, two days later re-instated a specific disarmament portfolio to be held by MP Kennedy Graham. On 19

December, United Future leader Hon. Peter Dunne said he will be concerned if the disbanding of the Minister for Disarmament leads to “a lessening of New Zealand's commitment to international disarmament” and told the ANZCMC that he would follow-up with the government on it.

Since 1987, eight New Zealanders have held the position of Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, including three women:

1987: Hon. Russell Marshall (Labour)  
1988-1990: Hon. Fran Wilde (Labour)  
1990-1996: Hon. Sir Doug Graham (National)  
1996-1999: Rt. Hon. Sir Don McKinnon (National)  
1999-2002: Mr. Matt Robson (Alliance)  
2002-2005: Hon. Ms. Marion Hobbs (Labour)  
2005-2008: Hon. Phil Goff (Labour)  
2008-2011: Hon. Ms. Georgina Te Heuheu (National)

New Zealand's last Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, Hon. Georgina Te Heuheu excelled in fulfilling her responsibilities in this role. In her first year on the job she worked to ensure swift passage of legislation to enforce the ban on cluster bombs, which in turn paved the way for New Zealand's early ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 22 December 2009. The Minister's high-level participation in the ban convention's First Meeting of States Parties in Vientiane, Lao PDR in November 2010, coupled with her field-visit to affected communities, was a high point of the meeting. Over the past three years, the Minister issued 31 statements on disarmament matters, of which one-third focused on cluster munitions.

In October 2011, the ANZCMC and its sister campaign the New Zealand Campaign Against Landmines (CALM) wrote to all political parties seeking their views on five policy questions relating to cluster munitions and landmines. National, the Greens and Labour provided written responses expressing their commitment to work on both. National said it would implement New Zealand's existing treaty commitments through legislation, policy, and participation in treaty processes, but did not mention the position of the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control.

According to United Future's foreign policy, New Zealand should “Continue to advocate for disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical, nuclear and biological weapons and technologies and anti-civilian munitions such as cluster bombs and land mines.”

Other New Zealand political parties have not made their views known on the disestablishment of the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control position, but some parties have expressed support for disarmament objectives such as the ban on cluster munitions, including ACT and the Maori Party.

The Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition (ANZCMC) and Campaign Against Landmines (CALM) are governed jointly by a working group comprised of the following groups: Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ, Caritas Aotearoa NZ, Christian World Service, Disarmament and Security Centre, Engineers for Social Responsibility NZ, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War NZ, National Council of Women NZ, National

Consultative Committee on Disarmament, Oxfam NZ, Peace Movement Aotearoa, Soroptimist International NZ, United Nations Association NZ, United Nations Youth Association NZ, UNICEF NZ, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Aotearoa.

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For more information see:

- Action Alert by Peace Movement Aotearoa: <http://on.fb.me/sWsqQ4>
- ANZCMC Letter to Prime Minister Rt. Hon. John Key: <http://bit.ly/tTAx85>
- ANZCMC Letter to Hon. Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs: <http://bit.ly/t08a7N>
- ANZCMC Letter to Hon. Georgina Te Heuheu, Minister for Disarmament: <http://bit.ly/tGQMgy>
- Summary of statements made by Minister for Disarmament, 2008-2011: <http://bit.ly/tC2RFN>
- Analysis of responses received to 2011 Election questions: <http://bit.ly/uJTVk4>
- Response to 2011 Election questions from National: <http://bit.ly/tsXhpu>, Labour: <http://bit.ly/tPfKkM>, Greens: <http://bit.ly/tCoLte>
- "Disarmament Matters in New Zealand" – Storify: <http://bit.ly/vAyQjY>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **Cluster munitions**

A cluster munition (or cluster bomb) is a weapon containing dozens or hundreds of small explosive submunitions or bomblets. Cluster munitions are dropped from the air or fired from the ground and designed to break open in mid-air, releasing the submunitions over an area that can be the size of several football fields. This means they cannot discriminate between civilians and soldiers. Many of the submunitions fail to explode on impact and remain a threat to lives and livelihoods for decades after a conflict.

### **Convention on Cluster Munitions**

The 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and requires countries to clear affected areas within 10 years and destroy stockpiles of the weapon within eight years. The Convention also includes groundbreaking provisions requiring assistance to victims and affected communities. Opened for signature in Oslo in December 2008, the Convention entered into force and became binding international law on 1 August 2010. Since the Convention entered into force on 1 August 2010 countries must join through a process of accession, which is a one-step process combining signature and ratification, meaning it often requires both government and parliamentary approval. The convention is widely regarded as the most significant international disarmament treaty since the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

### **A total of 111 countries have joined the convention, of which 66 have ratified**

Afghanistan, Albania, *Angola*, Antigua and Barbuda, *Australia*, Austria, Belgium, *Benin*, *Bolivia*, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, *Cameroon*, *Canada*, Cape Verde, *Central African Republic*, *Chad*, Chile, *Colombia*, Comoros, *DR Congo*, *Republic of Congo*, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, *Côte D'Ivoire*, Croatia, *Cyprus*, Czech Republic, Denmark, *Djibouti*, *Dominican Republic*, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, France, *Gambia*, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, *Guinea*, Guinea Bissau, *Haiti*, Holy See, *Honduras*, *Hungary*, *Iceland*, *Indonesia*, *Iraq*, Ireland, Italy, *Jamaica*, Japan, *Kenya*, Lao

PDR, Lebanon, Lesotho, *Liberia*, *Liechtenstein*, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia FYR, *Madagascar*, Malawi, Mali, Malta, *Mauritania*, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, *Namibia*, *Nauru*, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, *Nigeria*, Norway, *Palau*, Panama, *Paraguay*, *Peru*, *Philippines*, Portugal, *Rwanda*, Samoa, San Marino, *Sao Tomé and Príncipe*, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, *Somalia*, *South Africa*, Spain, *Sweden*, *Swaziland*, *Switzerland*, *Tanzania*, *Togo*, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, *Uganda*, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia.  
(*Italics* indicates signatories that have not yet ratified)

### **New Zealand and cluster munitions**

New Zealand is one of six governments that led the 2007-2008 diplomatic Oslo Process that created the Convention on Cluster Munitions. New Zealand hosted a crucial meeting of the Oslo Process in Wellington on 18-22 February 2008 and chaired the negotiations on the definition of cluster munitions. It signed the Convention in Oslo on 3 December 2008 and enacted strong legislation to implement the Convention on 17 December 2009. New Zealand ratified the Convention on 22 December 2009, becoming a State Party on 1 August 2010. Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control, Hon. Georgina Te Heuheu led New Zealand's delegation to the Convention's First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Vientiane, Lao PDR in November 2010. She visited a province heavily affected by cluster bomb contamination and announced a funding contribution for clearance of cluster bombs and other explosive remnants of war in Lao PDR. In December 2011, the government terminated the position of Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control and incorporated the portfolio responsibilities into the position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

### **About the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Muniton Coalition (ANZCMC)**

The ANZCMC is a campaign of two dozen non-governmental organisations established in 2007 to support the call to stop cluster munitions from causing unacceptable harm to civilians. It is a member of the international Cluster Muniton Coalition, which is the civil society engine behind the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Mary Wareham coordinates the ANZCMC, which is comprised of 24 non-governmental organisations.  
[www.stopclusterbombs.org.nz](http://www.stopclusterbombs.org.nz)