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BASIC

The Nuclear Responsibilities Primer

Exploring Perspectives on Nuclear Responsibilities
within the Non-Proliferation Regime

Alice Spilman, Chiara Cervasio, Eva-Nour Repussard, and Mhairi McClafferty

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Introduction

Nuclear dangers are increasing from multiple angles. The taboo against nuclear use and other key norms of restraint that have become entrenched in the preceding decades have been deliberately challenged with Russian President Vladimir Putin's overt use of nuclear blackmail. Growing distrust and strategic competition are stalling progress on non-proliferation and disarmament within the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) context, deepening polarization amongst Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS).

As nuclear threats evolve and trust between states erodes, the idea of responsibility has become an increasingly essential yet complex tool for framing responses to global security challenges. In the absence of legally binding arms control measures, highly developed conceptions of nuclear responsibilities can play a crucial role in developing shared norms of restraint and fostering nuclear risk reduction.

Despite the centrality of the concept of responsibility in both academic and policy spaces, responsibility language in the nuclear field and in broader International Relations (IR) discourse often lacks conceptual clarity. In many cases the concept is taken as an unproblematic given.¹ The challenge with this "unreflexive" usage of responsibility language is that it is difficult to ascertain what the speaker meant when using the language. There are a number of calls, for example, for "more responsible behaviour", but what does "more responsible behaviour" look like? As there is no shared understanding of the idea of responsibility, exploring conceptions of responsibilities in practice requires a deeper look at meanings in use.

To further understand how the concept of responsibility is understood in practice by NWS and NNWS, this primer provides an overview of how the language of nuclear responsibilities has been used in the context of previous NPT Review Conferences (RevCons) and Preparatory Committees (PrepComs) between 2000 and 2023. In looking at the noun (responsibility), plural noun (responsibilities) and adjective (responsible), the primer shows that beyond these distinctions states use responsibility language in four ways: i) responsibility as cause or blame; ii) responsibilities as obligations; iii) to claim or dismiss identity as a responsible state; and iv) as an adjective to describe certain behaviours, manners or actions.

The dataset for this primer includes all publicly available statements made by states and groups of states at RevCons and PrepComs for the NPT since 2000.² The statements were uploaded to a content analysis software (NVivo) and subsequently coded for mentions of the terms "responsible", "responsibility" and "responsibilities".³ All references to responsibility language were collated and then coded into categories based on the conceptions of responsibility described in Part 2 section A. The dataset was used to explore the use of responsibility language both over time and by different groupings of states within recent NPT Review Cycles. A deep-dive into responsibility language use by the NWS, and selected NNWS was then conducted. The NNWS selected are Australia, Brazil, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea (ROK). These NNWS have been selected to include different perspectives across the deterrence/disarmament spectrum, geographical representation, and adherence to various NPT groupings and coalitions, including the

¹ Beverly Loke, 'Unpacking the politics of great power responsibility: Nationalist and Maoist China in international order-building', *European Journal of International Relations* 22(4) (2016): 847-871, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066115611968>.

² The year 2000 was selected as the start point because a dataset from 2000 to 2019 already existed: See Franze Eder, Marin Senn (2023), "The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)", <https://doi.org/10.11587/FYVR84>, AUSSA, V1. The research for this Primer added to that data set all publicly available statements from the 2022 RevCon (and its Preparatory Committees) and the 2023 PrepCom. The 2024 PrepCom is not included as it had not yet taken place at the time of data collection.

³ The dataset was imported into Nvivo, the content analysis tool used to code the use of responsibility language. All references to responsibility language were collated and then coded into categories based on the conceptions of responsibility described in Part 2 section A.

New Agenda Coalition, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPT), and the Vienna Group of 10 (VG10).

The primer is structured as follows. Section 1 will give an overview of how the concept of responsibility has been explored and used in IR scholarship as well as in diplomatic settings. Section 2 will explore different perspectives on nuclear responsibilities in the context of NPT Review Cycles and is subdivided into three sub-sections. Section A will provide an overview of the different ways states engage in responsibility talk in the NPT context. Section B will provide an overview of how the NWS have used responsibility language. Section C will examine perspectives on nuclear responsibilities from the eight selected NNWS to identify their core interests and assess their openness to engaging in promoting a responsibilities based regime. The primer will conclude with Section 3 that will discuss opportunities to promote nuclear responsibilities within the current review cycle.

I. The Responsibility Turn in International Relations

IR discourse is flooded with ‘responsibility talk’.⁴ State leaders have leaned on the concept to claim status, justify legal, political and moral duties of their own, and critically scrutinise the claims of others, as well as situate themselves in relation to global security challenges.⁵ The notion that with great power comes great responsibility has been a dominant axiom in IR for some time, suggesting that the most powerful states bear a larger share of the burden for maintaining international peace and security.⁶ More recently scholars have expanded this idea to include concepts such as ‘sovereignty as responsibility’ and the ‘responsibility to protect’ (R2P), which introduce a normative expectation that state power entails certain moral and legal obligations towards people.⁷ Beyond these concepts, in both the academic and policy worlds, responsibility is increasingly being applied as a lens to explore issues such as climate change,⁸ the protection of refugees,⁹ and most relevant to this primer, the management of nuclear weapons.¹⁰ Scholars exploring the concept of responsibility

⁴ Mlada Bukovansky, Ian Clark, Robyn Eckersley, Richard Price, Christian Reus-Smit, and Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Special Responsibilities: Global Problems and American Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.1.

⁵ Richard Beardsworth, ‘From Moral to Political Responsibility in a Globalized Age’, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 29(1) (2015), p.71, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679414000781>.

⁶ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society?: English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Steven Bernstein, ‘The absence of great power responsibility in global environmental politics’, *European Journal of International Relations* 26(1) (2020): 8-32, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066119859642>.

⁷ Francis M. Deng, Sadikiel Kimaro, Terrence Lyons, Donald Rothchild, and I. William Zartman, ‘Front Matter’, in *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa*, i-vi (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1996); Roberta Cohen, and Francis M. Deng, ‘Sovereignty as Responsibility: Building Block for R2P’, in Alex J. Bellamy, and Tim Dunne (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Responsibility to Protect*, Oxford Handbooks (2016, online edn, Oxford Academic, 3 Aug. 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198753841.013.5>.

⁸ Simon Caney, ‘Cosmopolitan justice, responsibility, and global climate change’, *Leiden Journal of International Law* 18(4) (2005): 747–775, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156505002992>; Sanna Kopra, *China and Great Power Responsibility for Climate Change* (London; New York: Routledge, 2019).

⁹ Robyn Eckersley, ‘The common but differentiated responsibilities of states to assist and receive ‘climate refugees’’, *European Journal of Political Theory* 14(4) (2015): 481-500 <https://doi.org/10.1177/147488511558483>; James Souter, ‘Good international citizenship and special responsibilities to protect refugees’, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 18(4) (2016): 795-811, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148116659607>; Chirstine Straehler, ‘Thinking about protecting the vulnerable when thinking about immigration: Is there a ‘responsibility to protect’ in immigration regimes?’, *Journal of International Political Theory* 8(1–2) (2012): 159–171, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jipt.2012.0036>.

¹⁰ Bukovansky et al, *Special Responsibilities*; Priya Chacko, and Alexander E. Davis, ‘Resignifying ‘responsibility’: India, exceptionalism and nuclear non-proliferation’, *Asian Journal of Political Science* 26(3) (2018): 352-370, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185377.2018.1486218>; Nicolas Leveringhaus, and Kate Sullivan de Estrada, ‘Between conformity and innovation: China and India’s quest for status as responsible nuclear powers’, *Review of International Studies* 44(3) (2018): 482-503, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210518000013>; Amelia Morgan, and Heather Williams, *Nuclear Responsibility: A New Framework to Assess U.S. and Russian Behaviour*. *Euro-Atlantic Security Policy Brief* (European Leadership Network, 2018), <https://europeanleadershipnetwork.org/policy-brief/nuclear-responsibility-a-new-framework-to-assess-u-s-and-russian-behaviour/>; Scott D. Sagan, ‘Shared responsibilities for nuclear disarmament’, *Daedalus* 138(4) (2009):157-168, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40544011>; Kate Sullivan, and Nicholas J. Wheeler, ‘Trustworthy Nuclear Sovereigns: India and Pakistan after the 1998 tests’, *Stosunki Miedzynarodowe - International Relations* 52(2) (2016): 289-306, <https://doi.org/10.7366/020909612201614>; Nina Tannenwald, ‘Life beyond arms control: Moving toward a global regime of nuclear restraint and responsibility’, *Daedalus* 149(2) (2020): 205-221, https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01798; William Walker, ‘The UK, threshold status and responsible nuclear sovereignty’, *International Affairs* 86(2) (2010): 447-464, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40664076>.

in relation to nuclear weapons have examined the distribution and allocation of nuclear responsibilities,¹¹ offered prescriptive suggestions of what nuclear responsibilities are or ought to be,¹² and debated what it means to claim the status of a 'nuclear responsible'.¹³

An important distinction is also made in the literature in relation to responsibilities that can be designated as "shared" or "special". Shared responsibilities, otherwise referred to as collective responsibilities, apply to all within a given context. e.g. as state parties to the NPT, or even simply through membership of the international community.¹⁴ Special responsibilities, on the other hand, are defined as 'a differentiated set of obligations' which 'provide a principle of social differentiation for managing collective problems in a world characterised by both formal equality and inequality of material capability'.¹⁵ Within the NPT review process, state parties typically refer to three "groups" that possess special responsibilities: (i) the two largest nuclear weapon states (Russia and the United States);¹⁶ (ii) the P5 both due to their status as NWS and permanent members of the Security Council;¹⁷ and (iii) states under the nuclear umbrella.¹⁸

¹¹ Bukovansky et al, *Special Responsibilities*; Sagan, 'Shared responsibilities for nuclear disarmament'.

¹² John Gower, and Christine Parthemore, *A Practical Strategy for Nuclear Risk Reduction and Disarmament: Fulfilling the Code of Nuclear Responsibility*, Briefer No.17 (Washington DC: Council on Strategic Risks, 2021), <https://councilonstrategicrisks.org/2021/04/19/briefer-a-practical-strategy-for-nuclear-risk-reduction-and-disarmament-fulfilling-the-code-of-nuclear-responsibility/>; Michael Krepon, 'Norms of Responsible Nuclear Stewardship', *Arms Control Wonk*, 25 March 2019, <https://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/1206923/norms-of-responsible-nuclear-stewardship/>; Tannenwald, 'Life beyond arms control'; Morgan, and Williams, *Nuclear Responsibility: A New Framework to Assess U.S. and Russian Behaviour*.

¹³ Leveringhaus, and Sullivan de Estrada, 'Between conformity and innovation'; Karthika Sasikumar, 'India's Emergence as a "Responsible" Nuclear Power', *International Journal* 62 (4) (2007): 825-844, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40204339>.

¹⁴ Sagan, 'Shared responsibilities for nuclear disarmament'.

¹⁵ Bukovansky et al, *Special Responsibilities*, p. 16.

¹⁶ For example, Statement by Türkiye, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee I, 10 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/10Aug_MCI_Turkiye.pdf - "The nuclear-weapon States, particularly those with the largest nuclear arsenals have a special responsibility to take steps towards reduction of their nuclear stockpiles"; Statement by the European Union, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Statement, 1 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/1Aug_EU.pdf - "Recalling the obligation for all nuclear weapon States arising from Art. VI of the NPT, we underline that the two nuclear weapon States with the largest arsenals hold a special responsibility in the area of nuclear disarmament and arms control".

¹⁷ For example, Statement by the Republic of Korea, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 2 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/1Aug_ROK.pdf - "The P5, in particular and among others, should assume their due and special responsibilities under Article VI of the Treaty."; Statement by Canada, delivered at the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 15 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/15Aug_MCI_Canada.pdf - "We also believe that NWS have a special responsibility in seeking to unlock negotiations on an FMCT"; Statement by H.E. Mr Ikram Mohammad Ibrahim, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation on Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 1 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/1Aug_Malaysia.pdf - "In arriving at this unanimous conclusion, the ICJ had clearly reaffirmed the obligation of all NPT States Parties under Article VI of the Treaty. The nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility to take the lead in this regard".

¹⁸ For example, Statement by South Africa, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster I Statement - Nuclear Disarmament, 3 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/3Aug_South_Africa.pdf - "In the letter and spirit of Treaty these States that are secure under the nuclear Umbrella have got disarmament responsibilities".

A 'responsibility turn'¹⁹ is also emerging in diplomatic talks, in relation to what counts as responsible state conduct in relation to artificial intelligence, outer space, cybersecurity, and nuclear weapons. The January 3, 2022, Joint Statement by the P5 places responsibility at the heart of its message, stating that '[we] consider the avoidance of war between Nuclear-Weapon States and the reduction of strategic risks as our foremost responsibilities'.²⁰ Likewise, Working Paper 70 to the Tenth NPT RevCon, co-sponsored by France, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US), seeks to promote a discourse on 'principles and responsible practices' for nuclear weapon states.²¹ Recently, civil society efforts have outlined the need for responsibility-based approaches to non-proliferation and disarmament. At the June 2023 PrepCom, the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World Without Nuclear Weapons emphasised that 'It is a moral imperative and a shared responsibility of all States to collaborate in upholding the international nuclear non-proliferation regime – indeed, doing so is in the interest of all humanity and life on Earth'.²²

Within this growing emphasis on responsibility, BASIC has developed significant expertise and facilitated multiple Track 1.5 dialogues into notions and narratives of nuclear responsibilities.²³ Since 2016, and through its flagship Programme on Nuclear Responsibilities, co-created with the Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security (ICCS) at the University of Birmingham, BASIC's work has applied to both NWS and NNWS including

¹⁹ Sebastian Brixey-William, Rishi Paul, and Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'The Responsibility Turn in Nuclear Diplomacy' (BASIC and ICCS, October 2021), <https://basicint.org/the-responsibility-turn-in-nuclear-diplomacy/>.

²⁰ Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races, The White House, 3 January 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/03/p5-statement-on-preventing-nuclear-war-and-avoiding-arms-races/>.

²¹ Principles and Responsible Practices for Nuclear Weapon States: Working Paper Submitted by France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 29 July 2022, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.70, https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/npt_conf.2020_e_wp.70.pdf.

²² Note verbale dated 2 June 2023 from the Government of Japan addresses to the President of the Preparatory Committee for the Eleventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons at its first sessions: Working paper submitted by Japan, 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 2 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.2, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP2.pdf>.

²³ BASIC has created the "Nuclear Responsibilities Approach" to promote new thinking and dialogue on states' responsibilities in relation to nuclear weapons and has established a strong reputation as a third-party facilitator of nuclear responsibilities dialogues. The Approach has been set out in two reports: Sebastian Brixey-Williams, and Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Nuclear Responsibilities: A New Approach on Thinking and Talking about Nuclear Weapons* (London: BASIC and ICCS, 2020), <https://basicint.org/report-nuclear-responsibilities-a-new-approach-for-thinking-and-talking-about-nuclear-weapons/>; Sebastian Brixey-Williams, Alice Spilman, and Nicholas J. Wheeler, *The Nuclear Responsibilities Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Thinking, Talking and Writing* (London: BASIC and ICCS, 2022), https://basicint.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BASIC_Nuclear-Responsibilities-Toolkit_2nd-Edition.pdf.

the UK,²⁴ the Netherlands,²⁵ Japan,²⁶ Malaysia,²⁷ and Brazil,²⁸ as well as with other non-NPT nuclear armed states such as India and Pakistan.²⁹

One key finding of our work with NNWS has been the articulation of the idea of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR).³⁰ The CBDR guiding principle is borrowed from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992).³¹ It refers to the idea that, when states collectively face a shared issue and bear a joint responsibility to address it, such as in the case of climate change, their obligations are nonetheless ‘differentiated’ based on their resources and comparative strengths.³² In the global nuclear order, states have collective responsibilities as well as legal obligations towards two key goals: non-proliferation and disarmament. However, each has differentiated responsibilities towards these goals and contributes to their achievement in different ways. This can in turn inform differentiated policies and practices that states might pursue to fulfill their responsibilities in relation to the common goals of non-proliferation and disarmament.

As illustrated in Part 2 below, CBDR is reflected in the language that NWS and NNWS have used when talking about their nuclear responsibilities, however, NNWS have also emphasised that shared responsibilities do not imply an equal share of responsibility. By virtue of possessing nuclear weapons, the NWS also have ‘special’ or ‘unique’ responsibilities to pursue Article VI,³³ decrease the trend of the global nuclear stockpile, and encourage ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Another key finding of our work is that, despite the central role of responsibility in both academic and policy discussions, the concept of responsibility remains conceptually vague, particularly within the nuclear field. Notably, despite the prevalence of responsibility talk, there has been no comprehensive analysis of how

²⁴ In the UK, engagement with nuclear responsibilities has encouraged a shift away from a culture of blame and allowed for the articulation of specific responsibilities that could again reduce risk without being enshrined in formal arms control agreements. Moreover, BASIC’s work with the UK has discouraged the latter from using the language of “responsible nuclear weapon state” due to its polarising nature. See Sarah Price, ‘Nuclear Responsibilities: A New Approach for Thinking and Talking about Nuclear Weapons’, YouTube video, 2 November 2020, <https://basicint.org/event-nuclear-responsibilities-a-new-approach-for-thinking-and-talking-about-nuclear-weapons/>; Chiara Cervasio, *Exploring the United Kingdom’s Nuclear Responsibilities* (London: BASIC and ICCS, 2022), <https://basicint.org/exploring-the-uk-nuclear-responsibilities/>.

²⁵ Sebastian Brixey-Williams, *Differentiated Nuclear Responsibilities among Non-Nuclear Possessor States: Perspectives from the Hague* (London: BASIC and ICCS, 2020), <https://basicint.org/report-differentiated-nuclear-responsibilities-among-non-nuclear-possessor-states-perspectives-from-the-hague/>.

²⁶ Sebastian Brixey-Williams, *Common but Differentiated Nuclear Responsibilities: Perspectives from Tokyo* (London: BASIC and ICCS, 2019), <https://basicint.org/report-common-but-differentiated-nuclear-responsibilities-perspectives-from-tokyo/>.

²⁷ Sebastian Brixey-Williams, *Nuclear Responsibilities in an Interconnected World: Perspectives from Kuala Lumpur* (London: BASIC and ICCS, 2019), <https://basicint.org/report-nuclear-responsibilities-in-an-interconnected-world/>.

²⁸ Alice Spilman, *Nuclear Responsibilities in the Global Nuclear Order: Perspectives from Sao Paulo*, (London: BASIC and ICCS, 2020), <https://basicint.org/report-nuclear-responsibilities-and-the-global-nuclear-order-perspectives-from-sao-paulo/>.

²⁹ Chiara Cervasio, Nicholas J. Wheeler, and Mhairi McClafferty, *Crisis Prevention and Management in South Asia: Mutual Confidence, Risk, and Responsibility* (London: BASIC, 2024), <https://basicint.org/report-crisis-prevention-and-management-in-south-asia/>; Alice Spilman, Chiara Cervasio, and Eva-Nour Repussard, *Exploring Nuclear Risk Reduction Pathways in Southern Asia through Nuclear Responsibilities* (London: BASIC, 2023), <https://basicint.org/report-exploring-nuclear-risk-reduction-pathways-in-southern-asia/>; Chiara Cervasio, and Rishi Paul, *Different Perceptions, Shared Understandings: Towards a Responsibility-Based Regime to Reduce Nuclear Risks in the Asia-Pacific* (London: BASIC, 2022), <https://basicint.org/report-different-perceptions-shared-understandings/>.

³⁰ Brixey-Williams, *Common but Differentiated Nuclear Responsibilities*.

³¹ Brixey-Williams, *Common but Differentiated Nuclear Responsibilities*, p. 6.

³² Brixey-Williams, *Common but Differentiated Nuclear Responsibilities*, p. 7.

³³ Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

responsibility language is actually used in practice. This primer examines responsibility language as it is expressed and understood within NPT discussions, shedding light on whether calls for responsibility are merely rhetorical or if they serve as tangible guidelines for shaping state behaviour and fostering international cooperation. Such an analysis could clarify how responsibility is operationalised among NWS and NNWS, offering insights into how this concept could help bridge divides within the treaty framework and encourage actionable norms of restraint and nuclear risk reduction.

II. Responsibility Language in Use: Exploring Perspectives on “Nuclear Responsibilities” in the Context of the NPT

A. General Overview of the Use of Responsibility Language in the NPT

There are four primary ways in which states use the language of responsibilities within the NPT review process:

(i) **Responsibility as accountability** (cause, blame) - ‘to be responsible for some act, event or set of circumstances is to be answerable for it’.³⁴ Responsibility as such is a retrospective mechanism employed to judge, both positively and negatively, the past actions of an actor.³⁵ An example of this is Canada’s statement at the 2022 RevCon that, ‘The very same state [Russia] that is responsible for the current tense international security environment is now responsible for breaking consensus’.³⁶

(ii) **Responsibilities as obligations** (duty) - used in a prospective sense, implies that actors have certain tasks or duties required of them which are usually tied to certain roles.³⁷ Responsibilities can be shared, special, allocated to an organisation, or individual. An example of this is the Republic of Korea’s statement at the 2022 RevCon that, ‘The P5, in particular and among others, should assume their due and special responsibilities under Article VI of the Treaty’.³⁸

(iii) **Responsible identity** - employs the adjective responsible; to be considered a responsible actor, implying positive characteristics and attributes.³⁹ An example of this is China’s statement at the 2019 PrepCom that, as ‘a responsible state, China actively participated in the international non-proliferation cooperation’.⁴⁰

(iv) **Responsible manner** - employs the adjective responsible to describe behaviour or an approach. An example of this is France’s statement at the 2013 PrepCom that, ‘My country is firmly committed to promoting

³⁴ Toni Erskine, *Can Institutions Have Responsibilities?: Collective Moral Agency and International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.8.

³⁵ Magdalena Bexell and Kristina Jönsson, ‘Responsibility and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals’, *Forum for Development Studies* 44(1) (2016): p.17, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08039410.2016.1252424>.

³⁶ Statement by Canada, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 26 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/26Aug_Canada.pdf.

³⁷ Loke, ‘Unpacking the politics of great power responsibility’.

³⁸ Statement by H.E. Ham Sang-wook, Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs of the Republic of Korea, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 2 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/1Aug_ROK.pdf.

³⁹ Jamie Gaskarth, ‘Rising Powers, Responsibility and International Society’, *Ethics & International Affairs* 31(3) (2017): pp. 287-311, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ethics-and-international-affairs/article/rising-powers-responsibility-and-international-society/76D5EC745B207058B331EBFE9409C6EE>.

⁴⁰ Statement by China, delivered at the 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster II Statement, 2 May 2019, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/statements/3May_China2.pdf.

responsible development of civil nuclear applications, responsible development which means under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions, and with respect for the environment'.⁴¹

The focus of this primer is primarily on how states engage with the language of responsibilities and responsible behaviours (ii and iv). BASIC's Nuclear Responsibilities Programme has always encouraged avoidance of the blame game ever present in international politics, and relatedly, discourages using the language of "responsible nuclear weapon state" due to its polarising nature.⁴²

As noted in the previous section, responsibilities can be designated as shared or special, or allocated to an organisation, or individual state.

Figure 1: Use of Responsibility Language

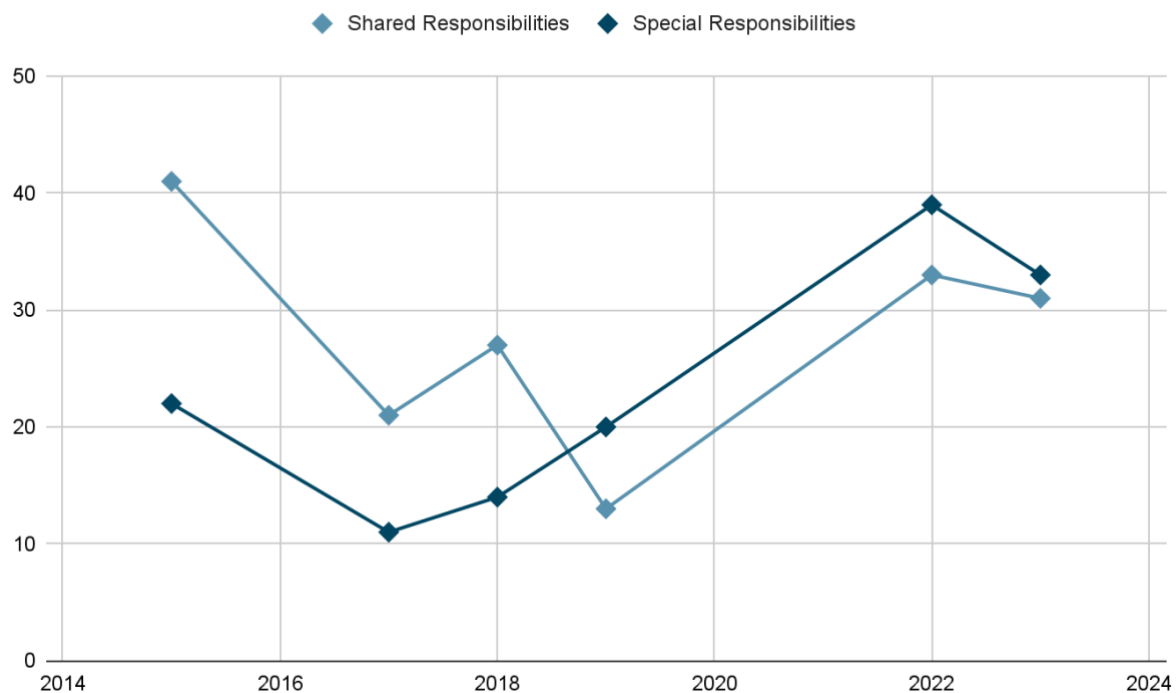


Figure 1 visualises the use of shared versus special responsibilities in the context of the NPT. In recent years there has been a rise in the use of "special responsibility" language. At the 2022 Review Conference, the NNWS emphasised that the NWS bear a special responsibility to reduce risks,⁴³ and called on the NWS to assume their

⁴¹ Statement by H.E. Mr Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament, 2013 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 22 April 2013, https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom13/statements/22April_France.pdf.

⁴² For example, as mentioned in the previous section, BASIC's work with the UK has discouraged the latter from using the language of "responsible nuclear weapon state" due to its polarising nature. See Price, 'Nuclear Responsibilities: A New Approach for Thinking and Talking about Nuclear Weapons'.

⁴³ Statement by South Africa, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 2 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/2Aug_SouthAfrica.pdf.

'special responsibilities under Article VI'.⁴⁴ It was also noted that the NWS have a special responsibility to secure universal adherence to the CTBT.⁴⁵ Whilst the above special responsibilities were noted in 2015 also, the 2015 RevCon placed much greater emphasis on shared responsibilities. Shared responsibilities promoted in the 2015 Review Conference centred on three themes:

(i) Considering the humanitarian and planetary impacts of nuclear weapons, all states share the responsibility of preventing the use of nuclear weapons⁴⁶ and acknowledging a 'shared responsibility for our common human heritage and future'.⁴⁷

(ii) Considering the indivisibility of international security, 'all States, regardless of their size or power, have a shared responsibility to contribute to the consolidation of an international order based on cooperation and regulated by standards'.⁴⁸ In pursuit of such order, all states share the responsibility to support and promote the non-proliferation regime.

(iii) In support of the non-proliferation regime, it is a collective responsibility of all states to ensure the implementation of the 64 actions in the Action Plan.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Statement by the Republic of Korea, 2022 RevCon, General Debate; Statement by Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Egypt), delivered at 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons., Main Committee I - Nuclear disarmament, 4 August 2022,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/4Aug_MCI_NAC.pdf;

Statement by Italy, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 2 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/2Aug_Italy.pdf;

Statement by Ms Outi Hyvärinen, Director for the Unit of Arms Control, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 4 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/4Aug_MCI_Finland.pdf;

Statement by the European Union, 2022 RevCon, General Debate. .

⁴⁵ Statement by H.E. Dr Chola Milambo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Zambia on behalf of the Africa Group, delivered at the 2022 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 2 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/2Aug_AfricanGroup.pdf.

⁴⁶ Statement by Austria on behalf of 49 states, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Closing Remarks, 22 May 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/22May_Austria.pdf ; Statement by the European Union, 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), General Debate, 28 April 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/28April_EU.pdf ; Statement by Russia, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 27 April 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/27April_Russia.pdf.

⁴⁷ Statement by Thailand, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 30 April 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/30April_Thailand.pdf.

⁴⁸ Statement by Chile, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 27 April 2015 https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/27April_Chile.pdf; Statement by the NPDI, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 27 April 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/27April_NPDI.pdf ; Statement by Romania, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 28 April 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/28April_Romania.pdf.

⁴⁹ Statement by the European Union, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee II, 4 May 2015, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament->

The shift in the use of responsibility language between 2015 and 2022 is mostly likely born out of the deteriorating security environment and subsequent frustration over the lack of progress towards Article VI. In 2019, the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) states emphasised that ‘the common responsibility to implement Article VI’ has been a key driver of ‘the diplomatic process which led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’.⁵⁰ At the 2022 RevCon and again at the 2023 PrepCom, a number of NNWS expressed their frustration that despite the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the NNWS seemed to be taking on a number of extra responsibilities while the NWS were not fulfilling their fundamental responsibilities.

B. Use of Responsibility Language by Nuclear Weapon States

The NWS – China, France, Russia, the UK and the US – have throughout the NPT RevCons often and repeatedly used the language of ‘responsibilities’ with regards to different obligations. Most NWS put an emphasis on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and its development, as well as responsibilities towards nuclear security and safety, and non-proliferation. They also mention responsibilities regarding disarmament.

First and foremost, NWS have often put a special emphasis on their responsibilities to preserve, support and strengthen the non-proliferation regime – however, most NWS argue that this responsibility cannot be solely one for the NWS, but also a shared responsibility of all State Parties to the NPT.

The UK has stated that all countries ‘shoulder serious responsibilities’ with regards to non-proliferation,⁵¹ – whilst stressing that ‘NWS have a special responsibility for the continued strength and implementation of the NPT’.⁵² Similarly, France called for ‘unity and spirit of responsibility’ to preserve and strengthen the regime⁵³ – also stressing that, as NWS, France has special responsibilities to protect and bolster international peace and security’.⁵⁴ Russia on the other hand stated to be ‘fully aware of its responsibility’ to further strengthen the NPT, but argues that ‘the scope of this task goes beyond the efforts of the nuclear powers alone. This is a task for all its participants’.⁵⁵ The US, too, pledged to work to strengthen the NPT and ‘to ensure that the rights and

[fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/4May_EU_MCII.pdf](https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/4May_EU_MCII.pdf); Statement by Bulgaria, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 29 April 2015,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/29April_Bulgaria.pdf; Statement by Czech Republic, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 28 April 2015 [https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-](https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/28April_CzechRepublic.pdf)

[fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/28April_CzechRepublic.pdf](https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/29April_Estonia.pdf); Statement by Estonia, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 29 April 2015,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/29April_Estonia.pdf.

⁵⁰ Taking forward nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil on behalf of Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa), 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 26 April 2019, NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.35, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/documents/WP35.pdf>.

⁵¹ Statement by Ambassador John Duncan, Head of the UK Delegation, delivered at 2007 Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 30 April 2007, https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2007/statements/UK_30_04_pm.pdf.

⁵² UK Government, ‘Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: An overview of UK action’, 2 November 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty-npt-an-overview-of-uk-action>.

⁵³ French Mission to the United Nations, ‘President Macron Addresses the Security Council on Non-Proliferation’, last modified 26 September 2018, <https://onu.delegfrance.org/President-Macron-addresses-the-Security-Council-on-non-proliferation>.

⁵⁴ Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (France), ‘Disarmament and Non-Proliferation’, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/security-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/disarmament-and-non-proliferation/>.

⁵⁵ RevCon_2000_GD_Russia_04_27_01 in Eder and Senn, ‘The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)’.

responsibilities of every nation in each of the Treaty's three pillars are upheld', and further argues that 'all NPT States Parties share the responsibility to work resolutely to prevent further non-proliferation by ensuring compliance'.⁵⁶ Similarly, China noted that it 'has always strictly fulfilled its international obligations and responsibilities in non-proliferation-related fields',⁵⁷ but that 'the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation is conducive to the maintenance of regional and international peace and security. Nuclear non-proliferation is therefore in the common interest and a shared responsibility of the international community'.⁵⁸

Whilst preventing nuclear proliferation, NWS have also emphasised their positive obligations under the NPT — in line with Article IV — and notably on their responsibility under Article IV to help develop and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In that regard, NWS have often stressed that this development help should be done in a responsible manner. Thus, France 'has expressed its willingness to share its experience in this field and consider how best to promote the responsible and sustainable development of civilian nuclear programmes through enhanced cooperation, based on intergovernmental agreements'.⁵⁹ Similarly, the US 'remains committed to peaceful nuclear cooperation under responsible non-proliferation undertakings, as provided for by the NPT'.⁶⁰

This help for the development of peaceful nuclear energy comes hand in hand with states' responsibility that such energy is not misused for illegal purposes, i.e. covert development of nuclear weapons. Thus, the US noted that as a supplier, it has 'specific responsibilities', such as 'not in any way to assist, encourage or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other explosive devices'.⁶¹ However, it also stresses that all State Parties to the NPT 'also have the responsibility to improve the implementation of Article IV in such a way that both preserves NPT Parties' right to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and ensures against abuse of this right by states pursuing nuclear weapon capabilities'.⁶²

Finally, as part of the "Grand Bargain", and in line with Article VI, most NWS stress that disarmament is a responsibility for NWS and NNWS alike. As France stated in its 'Concrete Steps to Disarmament' statement, 'all States are responsible for disarmament, whether they be nuclear-weapon States or not'.⁶³ Similarly, Russia

⁵⁶ RevCon_2010_C2_UnitedStates_05_10_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition).

⁵⁷ Implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the People's Republic of China: Report submitted by China, 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 16 November 2021, NPT/CONF.2020/41, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3956555?ln=en&v=pdf#files>; Implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the People's Republic of China: Report submitted by China, 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 29 April 2019, NPT/CONF/2020/PC.III/8, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n19/124/15/pdf/n1912415.pdf?token=5JMvssVLQITfjReoWR&fe=true>.

⁵⁸ Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons: Working paper submitted by China, 2007 Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 7 May 2007, NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/WP.47, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom07/workingpapers/WP47.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Framework for peaceful nuclear operation: Working paper submitted by Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Mexico, the Niger, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Ukraine, 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 29 November 2021, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.27, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/WP27.pdf>.

⁶⁰ RevCon_2000_C3_UnitedStates_04_27_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

⁶¹ RevCon_2005_C3_UnitedStates_05_19_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

⁶² PrepCom_2004_C3_UnitedStates_04_29_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

⁶³ Nuclear disarmament : France's concrete commitment: Working paper submitted by France, 2010 Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 3 - 28 May 2010, https://onu.delegfrance.org/IMG/pdf_Nuclear_Disarmament_-_13_Practical_Steps_of_2000.pdf.

argued that nuclear disarmament is not solely the responsibility of the NWS, but 'an area of shared responsibility'⁶⁴ and 'The Russian Federation, being aware of its special responsibility as a nuclear power for fulfilling the obligations under Article VI of the NPT, continues in the spirit of goodwill the in-depth, irreversible and verifiable reductions of its nuclear potential'.⁶⁵ However, China's statements differ from the other NWS, often emphasising that 'states possessing the largest nuclear arsenals bear special responsibility for nuclear disarmament',⁶⁶ and 'should take the lead in drastically reducing their nuclear arsenals',⁶⁷ and argue that the US and Russia bear the biggest responsibility for leading disarmament efforts. But similarly to their NWS peers,⁶⁸ China stated that it has 'never shied away from her responsibility in nuclear disarmament'.⁶⁹

C. Use of Responsibility Language by Key Non-Nuclear Weapon States Representing Different Groupings within the NPT

1. Australia (Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and Vienna Group of Ten)

The perceptions of Australia's core responsibilities are divided between their obligations under the NPT and their commitments as part of the security relationship with the US. Australia has a special responsibility as a US ally and beneficiary of the nuclear umbrella to engage in risk reduction and pursue behaviours that will not raise risks in the region.⁷⁰ More recently, Australia has also frequently claimed the identity of a "responsible uranium supplier",⁷¹ noting that all states in a position to do so have a responsibility to share the benefits of nuclear

⁶⁴ Nuclear disarmament: an area of shared responsibility: Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation, Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 27 May 2022, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.56, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/WP56.pdf>.

⁶⁵ RevCon_2010_C1_Russia_05_07_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

⁶⁶ Nuclear disarmament and the reduction of danger of nuclear war: Working paper submitted by China, 2007 Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/WP.46, <https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2007/documents.html>; Similar statements have been made at the 2003, 2004 and 2007 PrepComs.

⁶⁷ Implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the People's Republic of China: Report submitted by China, 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 27 April 2015, NPT/CONF.2015/32, <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=NPT%2FCONF.2015%2F32&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequeste d=False>.

⁶⁸ French Mission to the United Nations, '19 april 2012: Security Council: Nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, and security: Statement by Mr Martin Briens, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations', 19 April 2012, <https://onu.delegfrance.org/19-april-2012-Security-Council> - "Secondly, we should also pursue disarmament efforts in every area. I should recall that France fully meets its responsibilities under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)."

⁶⁹ Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hu Xiaodi, Head of the Chinese Delegation, delivered at the 2002 Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 8 April 2002, http://un.china-mission.gov.cn/eng/chinaandun/disarmament_armscontrol/npt/200204/t20020408_8412375.htm.

⁷⁰ Private engagements with BASIC.

⁷¹ Statement by Australia, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster 3 Issues - Peaceful Uses, 8 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/8Aug_Australia.pdf; Statement by Mr Richard Mathews, Director of Nuclear Policy, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee III, 4 May 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/4May_Australia_MCIII.pdf.

technology for peaceful uses.⁷² Australia is particularly active on issues of nuclear safety and security associated with peaceful uses.⁷³

Historically, Labour Australian governments have often committed to 'good international citizenship', a concept developed by the Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans in the 1990's, combining a pragmatic realist approach with liberal commitments.⁷⁴ In line with this idea of good international citizenship, Australian officials have made reference to norms of responsible international behaviour in the context of the NPT. The most frequently ascribed norm of responsible international behaviour being non-proliferation.⁷⁵ Numerous times the Australians have affirmed the shared responsibility to support the non-proliferation regime,⁷⁶ and to protect, preserve and advance the NPT,⁷⁷ while noting that the NWS have a specific responsibility to ensure their nuclear weapons policies do not detract from the non-proliferation norm.⁷⁸ Australian officials have also stressed that non-NPT states have a responsibility to support the non-proliferation norm.⁷⁹ Whilst a number of responsibilities are specified and enshrined within the NPT, nuclear responsibilities are not tied to membership of the NPT alone, but rather are tied to inherent membership of the international community and the idea of being a good international citizen.

⁷² Statement by Riin Teoh, Assistant Director, Nuclear Policy, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, delivered at the 2019 Preparatory Committee for the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster 3 (Peaceful Uses), 6 May 2019, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/statements/6May_Australia_C3.pdf.

⁷³ See: Addressing the "Vienna issues": the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; compliance and verification; export controls; cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; nuclear safety; nuclear security; and discouraging withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Working paper submitted by Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden (the Vienna Group of Ten), 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 20 June 2022, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.3/Rev.1, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/WP3.1.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Interview conducted with BASIC (Interview 22); Gareth Evans, *Good International Citizenship: The Case For Decency*. In the National Interest Series, (Melbourne, Monash University Publishing, 2022).

⁷⁵ Statement by H.E. Mr Michael Smith, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations and Conference on Disarmament, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 28 April 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom03/2003statements/28April_Australia.pdf; Statement by Alexander Downer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia, 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 2 May 2005, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2005/GDstatements/Australia.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Statement by Mr Darren Hansen, First Secretary, Australia Mission to the United Nations, Ninth Review Conference to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 4 May 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/4May_Australia_MCI.pdf.

⁷⁷ Statement by Australia, delivered at the 2017 Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 8 May 2017, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom17/statements/8May_Australia.pdf.

⁷⁸ Statement by Dr Geoffrey Shaw, Deputy Permanent Representative, Australian Mission to the Conference on Disarmament, delivered at the 2004 Preparatory Committee of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster I Issues, 29 April 2004, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom04/australiaCL1.pdf>.

⁷⁹ Statement by H.E. Caroline Millar, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, Ambassador for Disarmament, delivered at the 2007 Preparatory Committee of the 2010 Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Regional Issues, 10 May 2007, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom07/statements/10mayAustralia_morning.pdf; Statement by H.E. Caroline Millar, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, Ambassador for Disarmament, delivered at the 2008 Preparatory Committee of the 2010 Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 5 May 2008, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom08/statements/Cluster2/may05australia_pm.pdf.

On the issue of disarmament, Australian officials have urged that all states share the burden of responsibility for nuclear disarmament,⁸⁰ but noted that the primary responsibility lies with the NWS and in particular, the two largest weapon states.⁸¹ In collaboration with the NPTDI, they have also emphasised the special responsibility of the NWS to report on their nuclear disarmament activities, something for which there is not yet a formal mechanism.⁸²

2. Brazil (New Agenda Coalition)

Brazilian officials have outrightly refuted the idea that there can be a 'responsible' nuclear weapon state, claiming that responsible possession is an oxymoron.⁸³ They have opposed the idea of a "monopoly of responsibility"⁸⁴ claimed by the five legal possessors of nuclear weapons, a position they have maintained since their involvement in the 1960s in the negotiations in the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) that led to the creation of the NPT. This position is shared by the broader membership of the NAC which at the 2023 PrepCom refuted the claim that such a thing as "responsible nuclear deterrence" exists.⁸⁵ Any future claims to an identity as responsible possessors by the NWS are likely to be met with high levels of disapproval. However, Brazil has claimed a responsible identity for itself. At the 2022 RevCon, Brazil presented a working paper on their naval nuclear propulsion programme in which they claimed to be a "responsible international actor with irreproachable non-proliferation credentials".⁸⁶

Brazil is more open to the language of responsibilities (and related behaviours and practices), having employed the language of shared and/or collective responsibilities on numerous occasions. For example, Brazil has

⁸⁰ Statement by H.E. Caroline Millar, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, Ambassador for Disarmament, delivered at the 2007 Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster I, 8 May 2007, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom07/statements/8mayAustralia.pdf>; Statement by Mr Paul Wilson, Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, delivered at the 2013 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster I, 25 April 2013, https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom13/statements/25April_Australia.pdf.

⁸¹ RevCon_2000_GD_Australia_04_27_01_(1)_(1) in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

⁸² Enhancing transparency for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and strengthening the review process for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Türkiye, and the United Arab Emirates, First Preparatory Committee for the Eleventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 29 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.18, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP18.pdf>.

⁸³ Statement by H.E. Flávio Soares Damico, Ambassador, Special Representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 3 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/3Aug_Brazil.pdf.

⁸⁴ Statement by Flávio Soares Damico, 2023 PrepCom, 3 August 2023.

⁸⁵ Statement by Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 31 July 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/31July_NAC.pdf.

⁸⁶ Brazil's naval nuclear propulsion programme and the safeguards regime under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Working paper submitted by Brazil, 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 2 August 2022, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.71, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/WP71.pdf>.

referred to the collective responsibility to prevent proliferation,⁸⁷ and to reaffirm and build upon the NPT.⁸⁸ More recently, Brazilian officials have emphasised shared responsibilities when it comes to peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. In 2023, they specifically noted the shared responsibility to ensure that the technologies involved in Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) are safely and securely deployed.⁸⁹ Areas for cooperation on responsible practices with Brazil would most likely centre around peaceful uses of nuclear technology, an area within NPT discussions which Brazil frequently tries to exert influence through the presentation of working papers.⁹⁰

Any initiative that suggests Brazil might take on more responsibilities, however, would likely meet with high resistance. On numerous occasions Brazil has pointed out that many of the NNWS are going well beyond their responsibilities as good international citizens.⁹¹ While acknowledging that common but differentiated responsibilities exist within the NPT for the NWS and the NNWS, Brazil has claimed that when it comes to non-proliferation, NNWS have assumed the greatest responsibilities.⁹²

3. Japan (Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative)

As the only country that has experienced atomic bombings and nuclear devastation during war, Japan sees itself as having 'a responsibility to lead international efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons'.⁹³ Japan has made numerous references to responsibilities in the NPT context, mostly conceiving its responsibilities as obligations. References have included Japan's responsibilities towards:⁹⁴ i) leading

⁸⁷ Statement by Brazil, delivered at the 2007 Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 9 May 2007, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom07/statements/9mayBrazil_afternoon.pdf; Statement by Brazil, delivered at the 2008 Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster II, 2 May 2008, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom08/statements/Cluster2/May02Brazil.pdf>; Statement by Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, Head of the Delegation of Brazil, delivered at the 2009 Preparatory Committee to the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster II, 7 May 2009, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom09/statements/7MayC2_Brazil.pdf.

⁸⁸ Statement by Brazil, delivered at the 2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 24 April 2018, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom18/statements/24April_Brazil.pdf.

⁸⁹ Statement by the Delegation of Brazil, delivered at 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster III - Peaceful uses of nuclear energy, 8 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/8Aug_Brazil.pdf.

⁹⁰ Atoms for heritage: peaceful use of nuclear techniques for heritage science: Working paper submitted by Australia, Brazil, Egypt, France, and Netherlands (Kingdom of the), 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 14 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.16, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP16.pdf>.

⁹¹ Statement by the Delegation of Brazil, Tenth NPT Review Conference, Main Committee I, 5 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/5Aug_MCI_Brazil.pdf.

⁹² Statement by the Delegation of Brazil, delivered at the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee 2 - Non-Proliferation, 8 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/8Aug_MCII_Brazil.pdf.

⁹³ Statement by H.E. Mr Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, delivered at the 2018 Preparatory Committee for 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 24 April 2018, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom18/statements/24April_Japan.pdf.

⁹⁴ Similar clusters of responsibilities were also identified and discussed during a BASIC-ICCS roundtable with Japanese representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, think tanks, academia, civil society, and the military. See Brixey-Williams, Common but Differentiated Nuclear Responsibilities: Perspectives from Tokyo.

disarmament efforts;⁹⁵ ii) peaceful uses of nuclear energy, implementation of safeguards, and energy policies;⁹⁶ and iii) leading disarmament and non-proliferation education initiatives, and conveying the 'reality of the devastation caused by the use of nuclear weapons to the international community and to future generations'.⁹⁷

Moreover, Japan has used the language of 'special' responsibilities to urge NWS to pursue their obligations under Article VI⁹⁸ and to maintain a decreasing trend of the global nuclear stockpile.⁹⁹

It is crucial to note that, when talking about its responsibilities to lead disarmament efforts, Japan has also made reference to the deteriorating security environment and its 'solemn responsibility [...] to protect the lives and property of its people'. Therefore, according to Japan's official statements, its responsible approach 'strives to advance nuclear disarmament and security simultaneously, taking into account both humanitarian and security considerations'.¹⁰⁰ This can be traced back to Japan's 'nuclear dilemma' between advocating for

⁹⁵ Statement by H.E. Mr Taro Kono, 2018 PrepCom, 24 April 2018.

⁹⁶ Statement by Ambassador Toshiro Ozawa, Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organisations in Vienna, delivered at the 2012 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster 3 Specific issue - Peaceful uses of nuclear energy and other provisions of the Treaty, 10 May 2012,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom12/statements/10May_Japan.pdf;

Statement by H.E. Mr Toshio Sano, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Delegation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, delivered at the 2014 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster III, 5 May 2014, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom14/statements/5May_Japan.pdf;

Statement by Ambassador Mitsuru Kitano, Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organisations in Vienna, delivered at the 2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster II Nuclear Non-Proliferation, 30 April 2018,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom18/statements/30April_Japan.pdf;

Statement by Ambassador Mitsuru Kitano, Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organisations in Vienna, delivered at the 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster II, 3 May 2019, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/statements/3May_Japan.pdf;

Statement by Ambassador Mitsuru Kitano, Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organisations in Vienna, delivered at the 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster III Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, 6 May 2019,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/statements/7May_Japan.pdf.

⁹⁷ Disarmament and nonproliferation educations: Working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Austria, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates), 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 18 April 2019, NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.26,

<https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/documents/WP26.pdf>;

Statement by Mr Kazuyuki Hamada, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, delivered at the 2012 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 2 May 2012,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom12/statements/2May_Japan.pdf; See also

Brixey-Williams, Common but Differentiated Nuclear Responsibilities.

⁹⁸ General Statement by H.E. Mr Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 27 April 2015,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/27April_Japan.pdf.

⁹⁹ Statement by Kishida Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan, delivered at the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 1 August 2022,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/1Aug_Japan.pdf;

Statement by H.E. Mr Mitsuru Kitano, Ambassador, Director-General of the Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, delivered at the 2013 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 22 April 2013,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom13/statements/22April_Japan.pdf.

¹⁰⁰ General Statement by H.E. Kiyoto Tsuji, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, delivered at the 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 29 April

nuclear disarmament and relying on extended deterrence in a deteriorating regional and international security environment.¹⁰¹ According to the esteemed scholar Nobumasa Akiyama, such a dilemma has informed Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament, which was promoted and supported at the May 2023 G7 Leaders' meeting.¹⁰² At the summit press conference of the meeting, Kishida mentioned that in the current security environment, political leaders have the simultaneous responsibility to preserve the security of their countries while pursuing the ideal of a world without nuclear weapons.¹⁰³

4. Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan has employed the language of responsibilities to identify itself as a 'leader in nuclear responsibility' through its unwavering commitment to global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, as exemplified notably by renouncing its nuclear status and closing the Semipalatinsk testing site.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, in 2018, Kazakhstan emphasised the 'increased responsibility and strong commitment' of NNWS in advancing disarmament efforts, urging NWS to adopt more proactive measures towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, especially in alignment with their obligations outlined under Article VI of the Treaty.¹⁰⁵

Outside of these statements, Kazakhstan, alongside Kiribati, has called for the recognition of the responsibilities of NWS regarding the humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapon-related activities.¹⁰⁶ These responsibilities include acknowledging their role in providing victim assistance and remediating contaminated environments, whilst supporting nuclear justice initiatives.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, Kazakhstan emphasises the language of responsibilities concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It highlights the necessity of implementing provisions that address the special responsibilities of all states regarding secure storage, transportation, and proper disposal of nuclear materials, as well as preventing

2019, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/statements/29April_Japan.pdf ; Statement by H.E. Mr Taro Kono, 2018 PrepCom, 24 April 2018.

¹⁰¹ Nobumasa Akiyama, 'Managing the Dilemma: Japan's Nuclear Disarmament Agenda' (RUSI, 2023) <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/managing-dilemma-japans-nuclear-disarmament-agenda>. Such a dualistic approach was also discussed during the BASIC-ICCS 2019 roundtable. See Brixey-Williams, *Common but Differentiated Responsibilities*.

¹⁰² Akiyama, 'Managing the Dilemma'.

¹⁰³ Akiyama, 'Managing the Dilemma'. See also the Government of Japan, 'Japan's Long Efforts to Realize a World Without Nuclear Weapons', *KIZUANA*, 1 September 2023, https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/2023/09/world_without_nuclear_weapons.html#:~:text=At%20this%20time%2C%20when%20he,a%20world%20without%20nuclear%20weapons. In a similar fashion, the G7 leaders affirmed their commitment 'to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, *achieved through a realistic, pragmatic and responsible approach*'. Statement by G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament, 19 May 2023, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100506512.pdf>, emphasis added.

¹⁰⁴ Statement by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Ashikbayev, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 27 April 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/27April_Kazakhstan.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ Statement by the delegation of Kazakhstan, delivered at the 2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 24 April 2018, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom18/statements/24April_Kazakhstan.pdf.

¹⁰⁶ Addressing the Past Use and Testing of Nuclear Weapons: Working paper submitted by Kazakhstan and Kiribati, 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 28 July 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.27, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP27.pdf>.

¹⁰⁷ Addressing the Past Use and Testing of Nuclear Weapons, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.27.

the misuse of nuclear materials for military or weapons purposes.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, Kazakhstan highlights the role of the international community, particularly the IAEA, in aiding States trying to develop their nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes, specifically regarding the construction of nuclear power plants and research reactors. This assistance aims to ensure that these programmes are implemented safely, with clarity, predictability and technical robustness.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Kazakhstan refers to itself as a 'responsible member of the IAEA' by voluntarily contributing to support the work of the IAEA in carrying out its functions.¹¹⁰

5. Malaysia (Non-Aligned Movement)

Malaysia has rarely used the language of responsibilities in its individual statements. When it has done so, however, it has primarily employed the language to refer to its own obligations, notably in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons through collaborative efforts with other states,¹¹¹ and in maintaining nuclear safety standards within its own territory.¹¹² Moreover, Malaysia uses the language of responsibilities to refer to the responsibilities of all States in meeting their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty, especially NWS who bear a 'special responsibility' in this regard.¹¹³ This includes taking meaningful steps towards disarmament and negotiating in good faith towards nuclear disarmament agreements.

While Malaysia rarely incorporates the language of responsibilities within its individual statements, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), it aligns with a group of countries that consistently use the language within the joint statements and working papers, particularly to refer to certain obligations or duties of other actors. Within the NPT framework, NAM actively promotes the ratification of the CTBT, pinpointing the distinct responsibility of NWS in ensuring its implementation.¹¹⁴

Moreover, NAM uses the language of responsibilities to underscore the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons testing, highlighting the responsibility of all states, particularly NWS, to address safety and contamination issues stemming from the discontinuation of nuclear operations, including ensuring the safe resettlement of displaced populations and restoring economic productivity in affected areas.¹¹⁵ Additionally, NAM has used the language of responsibilities to highlight the duties of the IAEA in ensuring the fulfilment of

¹⁰⁸ Statement by Mr Zhangeldy Syrymbet, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, delivered at the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee III, 8 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/8Aug_MCIII_Kazakhstan.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ Statement by Mr Zhangeldy Syrymbet, 2022 RevCon, Main Committee III, 8 August 2022.

¹¹⁰ Statement by Mr Raja Reza Zaid Shah, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee II, 4 May 2015, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/NR31.pdf>.

¹¹¹ Statement by Malaysia, 2015 RevCon, Main Committee II, 4 May 2015.

¹¹² Intervention by the Delegation of Malaysia at the Focused Exchange of Views on Nuclear Security, delivered at the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee III, 10 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/10Aug_MCIII_Malaysia.pdf.

¹¹³ Statement by H.E. Mr Ikram Mohammad Ibrahim Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), General Debate, 1 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/1Aug_Malaysia.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Nuclear testing: Working paper submitted by the members the Group of Non-Aligned States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 14 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.9, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP9.pdf>.

¹¹⁵ Nuclear testing: Working paper submitted by members of the Group of Non-Aligned States Parties, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.9.

safeguard obligations assumed by States to ensure the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology and prevent such technology being used for proliferation of nuclear weapons.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, NAM regularly employs the language of responsibilities regarding the implementation of the 1995 Resolution, to establish a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East. NAM stresses the responsibilities of all States, particularly NWS, including the three co-sponsors of the resolution (Russia, the UK, and the US) to take all the necessary measures to ensure the full implementation of the resolution without further delay.¹¹⁷

6. Mexico (Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and New Agenda Coalition)

Mexico has sometimes used the language of nuclear responsibilities in individual statements within the context of the NPT. It has done so not so much to claim a responsible identity,¹¹⁸ but rather to underline a commitment towards promoting the universality of the NPT, calling on states that are outside the Treaty to adhere to it as NNWS.¹¹⁹

Moreover, Mexico has often encouraged the NWS to uphold their 'special' responsibilities and obligations to 'report on the steps taken towards reduction of their nuclear arsenals and their achievements in the areas of irreversibility, transparency and verification',¹²⁰ and to uphold their 'primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament'.¹²¹ In a statement released at the 2010 RevCon, Mexico underlined that the NWS have the '*enormous responsibility* of breaking the perverse equation of possessing nuclear weapons as a defense guarantee against these same weapons'.¹²²

As part of the NPDI (together with two other states analysed in this Primer, Australia and Japan) and the NAC (together with Brazil and New Zealand), Mexico is among the countries that jointly and consistently employ the language of responsibility to urge the NWS to uphold the 'special' or 'particular' responsibilities they have by virtue of possessing nuclear weapons. These include the responsibility for NWS to achieve disarmament and

¹¹⁶ Verification: Working paper submitted by the members of the Group of Non-Aligned States Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 14 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.15, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP15.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ Regional issues: Middle East: Working paper submitted by the members of the Group of Non-Aligned States Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 14 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.12, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP12.pdf>.

¹¹⁸ With the only exception of a statement in 2015 underlying that Mexico is a responsible NNWS complying with NPT obligations and commitments. See Statement by Mexican Delegation, delivered at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee III, 1 May 2015, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/4May_Mexico_MCIII.pdf.

¹¹⁹ PrepCom_2017_GD_Mexico_05_03_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'; RevCon_2010_GD_Mexico_05_06_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

¹²⁰ PrepCom_2002_NA_Mexico_04_09_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

¹²¹ PrepCom_2014_C1_Mexico_04_30_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'; PrepCom_2018_GD_Mexico_04_24_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

¹²² RevCon_2010_GD_Mexico_05_06_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)', emphasis added.

report on their disarmament activities,¹²³ to strengthen the NPT regime and its implementation,¹²⁴ and to encourage the ratification of the CTBT.¹²⁵

¹²³ Applying the principle of transparency in nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by Brazil on behalf of Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa as members of the New Agenda Coalition, Second Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 15 April 2013, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.II/WP.26, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom13/documents/WP26.pdf>; Increased transparency in nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates), 2014 Preparatory Committee of the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 19 March 2014, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.III/WP.10, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom14/documents/WP10.pdf>; Nuclear disarmament post-New START: Working paper submitted by members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates), 2014 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 17 March 2014, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.III.WP.9, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom14/documents/WP9.pdf>; Enhancing transparency for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and strengthening the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.18; Taking forward nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa), 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 13 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.5, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP5.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Taking forward nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.5; Enhancing national reporting as a key transparency and confidence-building measure: Working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates), 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 18 April 2019, NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.24, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/documents/WP24.pdf>.

¹²⁵ Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: Working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates), 2013 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 6 March 2013, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.II/WP.1, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom13/documents/WP1.pdf>; Recommendations for consideration by the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Joint working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates), 20 March 2015, NPT/CONF.2015/WP.16, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/documents/WP16.pdf>; Recommendations for consideration by the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Joint working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates), 10 September 2021, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.10, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/WP10.pdf>; Statement by Mr Theo Peters, Head of the Non-Proliferation, Disarmament, Arms Control and Export Control Division, Security Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands, on behalf of Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), delivered at the 2013 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 23 April 2013, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom13/statements/23April_NPDI.pdf.

NPDI and NAC statements also underline that all state parties to the NPT, including the NNWS, have common responsibilities to i) fulfil their NPT obligations across the three pillars and to strengthen the Review Conference processes and its outcomes;¹²⁶ ii) prevent the use of nuclear weapons as well as vertical and horizontal proliferation;¹²⁷ iii) achieve nuclear disarmament;¹²⁸ and iv) address the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The latter is depicted as a responsibility of all the NPT state parties, however, it is also conceived as an *urgent* responsibility for the NWS.¹²⁹

7. New Zealand (New Agenda Coalition and Vienna Group of Ten)

New Zealand has made some limited use of the language on nuclear responsibilities in its individual statements within the context of the NPT. In recent years, its use of the language has focused on promoting the

¹²⁶ Joint ministerial statement released at the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative held in Hiroshima, Japan, on 11 and 12 April 2014: Working paper submitted by joint working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates), 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 22 April 2014, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.III/WP.29,

<https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom14/documents/WP29.pdf>;

Strengthening the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons for the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty: Working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates), 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 3 May 2020, NPT/CONF.2020.WP.53, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/WP53.pdf>; Enhancing transparency for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and strengthening the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.18.

¹²⁷ Humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons: known risks and consequences: Working paper submitted by Ireland on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa as members of the New Agenda Coalition, 2014 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 4 April 2014, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.III/WP.19, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom14/documents/WP19.pdf>; Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Working paper submitted by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa), 2 April 2014, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.III/WP.18, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom14/documents/WP18.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons: known risks and consequences: Working paper submitted by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.III/WP.19; Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Working paper submitted by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, NPT/CONF.2015/PC.III/WP.18; Taking forward nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by New Zealand on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa), 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 9 March 2015, NPT/CONF.2015/WP.8, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/documents/WP8.pdf>; Taking forward nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa), 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 11 November 2021, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.5, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/WP5.pdf>.

¹²⁹ Measures to reduce the breadth of risks associated with nuclear weapons and measures to avoid increasing this risk: Working paper submitted by Austria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Kiribati Liechtenstein, Malta, Mexico, San Marino, Thailand, 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 25 July 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/Wp.24, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP24.pdf>.

implementation of Article VI obligations of the treaty,¹³⁰ as well as to emphasise the ‘special responsibility’ of NWS to report on the fulfilment of their disarmament obligations and commitments.¹³¹

The use of this language mirrors the language employed by the NAC, which New Zealand is also a part of alongside two other states discussed in this Primer, Brazil and Mexico. The NAC frequently employs the language of responsibilities to promote robust implementation of the Treaty and the NPT regime.¹³² Additionally, the NAC underscores the shared responsibility of all States in advancing disarmament efforts,¹³³ with particular emphasis on NWS, who bear a ‘special responsibility’ in this regard.¹³⁴

As part of the Vienna Group of Ten (VG10), New Zealand, alongside Australia (also analysed in this Primer), Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, are among countries that uses the language of responsibilities within the context of nuclear security and safety standards.¹³⁵ The VG10 underscores that States party to the NPT have responsibility to ensure that their nuclear-related exports do not facilitate the development of nuclear weapons or other explosive devices by adhering to export controls and verification measures to verify the peaceful uses of nuclear technology by recipient countries.¹³⁶ New Zealand has further emphasised this stance in its individual statements, highlighting that nuclear security should be ‘recognised as an indispensable component of the responsible use of nuclear technology’.¹³⁷

8. Republic of Korea (ROK)

For the ROK, all parties to the NPT have responsibilities with regards to advancing the three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy, noting that ‘All Parties must accept

¹³⁰ Statement by H.E. Dell Higgie Ambassador for Disarmament and Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, delivered at the 2018 Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster I, 23 April 2018,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom18/statements/25April_NAC.pdf.

¹³¹ Statement by H.E. Ambassador Lucy Duncan, New Zealand Ambassador for Disarmament and Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, 31 July 2023,

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/1Aug_NZ.pdf.

¹³² Taking forward nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.5.

¹³³ Taking forward nuclear disarmament: Working paper submitted by New Zealand on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, NPT/CONF.2015/WP.8.

¹³⁴ Taking forward nuclear disarmament. Working paper submitted by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.5.

¹³⁵ Addressing the “Vienna issues”: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; compliance and verification; export controls; cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; nuclear safety/ nuclear security; and discouraging withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Working paper submitted by Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden (the Vienna Group of Ten), 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 15 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.17, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/documents/WP17.pdf>.

¹³⁶ Addressing “Vienna issues”: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; compliance and verification; export controls; cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; nuclear safety; nuclear security; and discouraging withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Working paper submitted by the Vienna Group of Ten, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.17.

¹³⁷ Statement by New Zealand, delivered at the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee III, 8 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/9Aug_MCIII_NZ.pdf.

responsibility for taking steps both collectively and individually to advance the Treaty's three pillars and its fundamental objectives'.¹³⁸

The ROK is particularly vocal with regards to states' responsibility to disarm. On several occasions, they stated that the P5 'in particular' should assume their 'due' and 'special responsibilities' under Article VI of the Treaty.¹³⁹ They argue that this responsibility, however, should not be solely the one of the NWS, but that 'nuclear disarmament is indeed a shared responsibility'.¹⁴⁰

For the ROK, the P5 furthermore has special responsibilities with regards to non-proliferation: 'Beyond the Security Council's role under the NPT as the ultimate defender of compliance, it has responsibilities under the Charter to deal with specific proliferation concerns when they constitute a threat to the international peace and security'.¹⁴¹

The ROK puts an emphasis on their right to develop and obtain nuclear energy under Article IV of the NPT – but that it should be done in a responsible manner. Thus, they highlight the importance of non-proliferation, security, safety and safeguard for 'the responsible development of nuclear energy' and stress states' own 'responsibility' in nuclear security and nuclear safety.¹⁴² After the Fukushima accident, the ROK reiterated its 'share of the responsibility' in enhancing nuclear safety globally.¹⁴³ 'For concrete and effective cooperation among the State Parties, the Republic of Korea, as a responsible state party, has demonstrated its efforts to foster peaceful uses of nuclear energy by contributing to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF), and other IAEA programmes such as ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics, and Rays of Hope'.¹⁴⁴

Finally, adherence to the NPT is also emphasised as a responsibility by the ROK – not the least because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) arguably illegally withdrew from the treaty in 2003. They noted that 'full compliance of the NPT in a balanced manner is the essence of the global non-proliferation regime. In spite of diverging views and priorities, all States Parties share the responsibility to maintain and strengthen this regime'.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ Statement by the Republic of Korea, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster 3 (Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy), 9 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/8Aug_RoK.pdf.

¹³⁹ Statement by the Republic of Korea, delivered at the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee I (Nuclear Disarmament), 5 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/5Aug_MCI_ROK.pdf; Statement by the Republic of Korea, 2022 RevCon, General Debate, 5 August 2022.

¹⁴⁰ Statement by the Republic of Korea, delivered at the 2019 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster 1 (Disarmament), 2 May 2019, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom19/statements/2May_RoK.pdf.

¹⁴¹ PrepCom_2004_GD_RepublicofKorea_04_26_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

¹⁴² Nuclear power development: meeting the world's energy needs and fulfilling article IV: Working paper submitted by Canada, France, and the Republic of Korea, 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 12 May 2010, NPT/CONF.2010/WP.70, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2010/documents/WP70.pdf>.

¹⁴³ PrepCom_2014_C3_RepublicofKorea_05_05_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

¹⁴⁴ Statement by the Republic of Korea, delivered at the 2020 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster 3 (Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy), 9 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/8Aug_RoK.pdf.

¹⁴⁵ PrepCom_2018_GD_RepublicofKorea_04_23_01 in Eder and Senn, 'The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conferences Dataset (SUF edition)'.

III. Nuclear Responsibilities in the 11th Review Cycle: Pathways to Cooperation

Part 2 shows a wide range of states employing responsibility talk within the NPT review process. There are both commonalities and differences with how states use the language of responsibility. The first tension is over the concept of being a “responsible nuclear weapon state”. While the NWS have all at some time claimed this status, there is growing push back over ‘misleading claims of responsible possession’¹⁴⁶ from many members of the NAM and the NAC. Egypt and Brazil are particularly vocal on this issue. Given their influence over non-aligned states, whose cooperation is essential to the maintenance of the non-proliferation regime, it is worth considering the value of claims to responsible nuclear weapon status in the NPT context.

Of those engaging with responsibility language, the majority acknowledge that a number of responsibilities (conceived of as obligations) are shared (e.g. upholding the norm of non-proliferation, supporting the universality and survivability of the NPT, contributing to risk reduction and creating the environment for nuclear disarmament), but that the NWS bear special responsibilities when it comes to Article VI. The majority of the NWS also recognise this specific responsibility, although on numerous occasions China has tried to distinguish its special responsibilities from those of the US and Russia. To some extent we see states buying into the concept of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR) as described above, with responsibilities distributed not just between the NWS and the NNWS, but also between smaller and larger groupings of states who rely on nuclear deterrence. However, recently there has been more pushback from select NNWS who feel that the CBDR principle is not as equitable as it should be. As such, in efforts to cooperate with NNWS in the current Review Cycle we would recommend careful usage of the language of shared responsibilities, being mindful not to suggest that in pursuing shared responsibilities that the NNWS should take on any further significant obligations, at least not without the NWS also making progress on their special responsibilities under Article VI.

Mapping out how NPT selected states conceive of their and others’ responsibilities has been a crucial first step to identify states’ core interests and assess their openness to engaging in promoting a responsibilities based regime. However, in the 11th Review Cycle, we would encourage consideration on how to more fully operationalise already recognised shared and special responsibilities. There has been a recent uptick in references to “responsible behaviours” within the NPT review process with the most notable example being the P3 paper on Principles and Responsible Practices for Nuclear Weapon States.¹⁴⁷ However, more remains to be done in exploring how NWS and NNWS can unilaterally and collectively fulfil their shared and special responsibilities.

¹⁴⁶ Statement by the Delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster 2 Issues: Non-proliferation, 1 August 2023, [https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Non-Proliferation_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-_Preparatory_Committee_for_the_Eleventh_Review_ConferenceFirst_session_\(2023\)/Egypt_New_7.8_Cluster_02_Nonproliferati_on_final.pdf](https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Non-Proliferation_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-_Preparatory_Committee_for_the_Eleventh_Review_ConferenceFirst_session_(2023)/Egypt_New_7.8_Cluster_02_Nonproliferati_on_final.pdf).

¹⁴⁷ Principles and Responsible Practices for Nuclear Weapon States: Working paper submitted by France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.70.

Below we highlight three key areas that states have consistently mentioned in their responsibility talk that could provide the starting point for cooperation on nuclear responsibilities in the 11th Review Cycle.

1. Responsible Uses of Nuclear Technology

Responsibility language is highly prevalent within cluster three debates on peaceful uses. A wide range of states have called for responsible access to, and use of, nuclear technology, designating responsible use of nuclear technology to mean upholding the highest standards of safety, security, and safeguards.¹⁴⁸ Further specified responsible behaviours include knowledge-sharing for peaceful nuclear applications; ensuring the safe and secure management of nuclear materials; safe and secure waste management systems; and strengthening export controls and verification measures.

While nuclear safety and security have largely been categorised as individual state responsibilities, the sharing of best practices and promotion of responsible frameworks are viewed as a shared responsibility. As such, states have called for further development of an international nuclear security system to support states seeking to benefit from nuclear energy. Moreover, as nuclear technology advances, states are also calling for international cooperation on designing responsible management frameworks for these technologies, such as SMRs. The US is already leading the way on this with the Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of SMR Technology.¹⁴⁹

2. Responsibility to Report on Disarmament Activities

A large number of NNWS, both non-aligned and beneficiaries of a nuclear umbrella, have called for greater reporting on disarmament activities of the NWS as part of a broader call for greater transparency.¹⁵⁰ This kind of reporting was framed as a special responsibility of the NWS by the NPDI. The Philippines also argued that NWS 'have a special responsibility to demonstrate the highest level of transparency in fulfilling their commitments by upholding a gold standard of such reporting'.¹⁵¹ Alongside written reports, many NNWS

¹⁴⁸ Statement by H.E. Hamad Alkaabi, Permanent Representative of the UAE to UN & other Int. Organisations in Vienna, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), General Debate, 31 July 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/2Aug_UAE.pdf.

¹⁴⁹ Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of SMR Technology, (FIRST) Fact Sheet, <https://www.smr-first-program.net/partners/>.

¹⁵⁰ Statement H.E. Lucy Duncan, New Zealand Ambassador for Disarmament and Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, delivered at the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Main Committee I, 5 August 2022, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/10Aug_MCI_NZ.pdf; Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Cluster I Issues, 2 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/2Aug_NAM.pdf; Statement by Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 2 August 2023, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/2Aug_NAC.pdf.

¹⁵¹ Statement by the Philippines delivered by H.E. Maria Teresa T. Almojuela, Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the United Nations and Other International Organisations, delivered at the 2023 Preparatory Committee to the 2026 Review Conference of

emphasised their desire to have interactive discussions on the reports within the context of the review process. Efforts were made to discuss the reporting mechanism as part of the Working Group on Strengthening the Review Process, but as that working group proved unsuccessful at the 2023 PrepCom, states will be keen to find alternative ways of improving reporting.

3. Responsibility to Engage on Humanitarian Impacts

Countries analysed in this Primer within the NAC and NAM, as well as Kazakhstan, emphasise the collective responsibility of all states to cooperate on addressing the humanitarian and environmental impacts, with NWS holding a special and urgent responsibility for addressing these challenges. This reflects the disproportionate impact and influence wielded by NWS due to their possession of a nuclear arsenal. By highlighting their unique role, NNWS call for more proactive engagement from NWS in mitigating the humanitarian and environmental repercussions of nuclear activities.

Conclusion

This primer has provided an overview of how the language of nuclear responsibilities has been used in the context of NPT past and current RevCons and PrepComs by NWS and selected NNWS from different NPT groupings and coalitions. The analysis has identified these states' core interests and assessed their openness to engaging in promoting a responsibilities based regime.

The primer has highlighted that there is growing rejection of the idea of "responsible nuclear weapon states" from NNWS, especially within the NAC and the NAM. To promote cooperation on nuclear responsibilities within the non-proliferation regime, it is worth considering the value of claims to responsible nuclear weapon status in the NPT context. Moreover, the primer has explored opportunities for cooperation on implementing shared and special responsibilities in the current review cycle and beyond. The primer has identified three key areas for cooperation on nuclear responsibilities at the 11th NPT Review Cycle. These are: i) responsible uses of nuclear technology; ii) responsibility to report on disarmament activities; and iii) responsibility to engage on humanitarian impacts.

By examining how selected NPT states parties have engaged with the idea of nuclear responsibilities, this primer sought to provide valuable insights and recommendations to support diplomatic efforts and coalitions to nuclear responsibilities in the current review cycle and beyond.

the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Cluster I: Disarmament, 3 August 2023,
https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/3Aug_Philippines.pdf.

Authors

Alice Spilman is a Policy Fellow at BASIC and has worked on the Programme on Nuclear Responsibilities since 2019. Alice is also completing a PhD at the University of Birmingham exploring nuclear diplomacy and practices of power in the context of the NPT. She holds an MSc in Global Cooperation and Security and an MA in Social Research Methods. Alice is also one of three British Representatives taking part in the P5 Young Professionals Network.

Dr Chiara Cervasio is a Policy Fellow at BASIC and Programme Manager of the BASIC Programme on Nuclear Responsibilities. Chiara's expertise is in nuclear diplomacy and trust-building, nuclear risk reduction, and crisis management and de-escalation practices, especially in Southern Asia. Chiara holds a PhD in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Birmingham.

Eva-Nour Repussard is a Policy Fellow at BASIC, and has worked on the Programme on Nuclear Responsibilities since 2021. Eva-Nour's expertise is on strategic stability. Eva-Nour holds a MA from King's College London in Intelligence and International Security and a BA (Hons) in International Relations from the University of Birmingham and the Fudan University in Shanghai.

Mhairi McClafferty is a Policy Fellow at BASIC and has worked on the Programme on Nuclear Responsibilities since 2022. Mhairi's research interests include nuclear diplomacy, confidence resolution and crisis management, as well as exploring nuclear weapons from humanitarian and gender perspectives. She holds an MSc in Diplomacy and International Security, as well as a BA (Hons) in History from the University of Strathclyde.

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