

## **General Debate Speech – Mr Tangi Utikere MP [New Zealand Parliament]**

Madam/Mr President, Secretary-General and Members of the Assembly - Tena koutou katoa, Kia orana tatou katoatoa. I greet you all as the Member of Parliament for Palmerston North from Aotearoa New Zealand.

Over the years, our country has demonstrated that it takes its role in regional security and peacekeeping seriously, and as an 'honest broker' and a mediator, we are a country that is willing to stand on its track record. As a global citizen, our sense of responsibility has never restricted us to our own backyard - we have also shown a commitment well beyond our own waters.

Our leadership in the area of Nuclear Disarmament speaks for itself – we have never shied away from this mantra; and in fact being nuclear-free is firmly imbedded in our identity as a nation – its part of the Kiwi DNA.

More recently, our focus has been on doing what we can to promote a stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific, which includes a greater presence in the region. [And I want to mihi to our Pacific Brothers and Sisters who are here as part of this 148th Assembly in Geneva.]

This approach has seen us focus on regional priorities – such as Climate Change; economic resilience, health and education, gender, human rights and a focus on young people – all of importance to the work of the IPU. And to assist with policy and partnership opportunities for the Pacific region where we can.

Our experience with Select Committees that exist within our parliamentary system is that they assist in playing a vital role in scrutinising our executive, but they also provide the opportunity for public input into the process.

They can initiate independent inquiries into any matters that it considers worthy of scrutiny or investigation, ensuring active transparency and a sense of public confidence within the system.

It is more than desirable for all parliamentarians to reflect upon the role they can play in the areas of peace and security. The stark reality is that in a global context, such an opportunity is not available to all. This means we must all look for ways to take up the challenge and responsibility to assist other parliamentarians and democracies - whether that's in our own region, or further abroad.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, kia orana koutou kātoatoa.

Meitaki Ma'ata.