New Zealand Statement to the
Humanitarian Segment of the 69th Session of the General Assembly

Statement by Ambassador Jim McLay, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the
United Nations

11 December 2014

Mr President -

Over the last year there has been a stark rise in humanitarian need across the globe.

Much of this is due to armed conflicts, many of which are now protracted emergencies.

And so, New Zealand calls on parties to all armed conflicts to work in good faith with each other and with the United Nations to end these conflicts.

New Zealand recognises that its election to the Security Council for 2015-2016 imposes an additional responsibility to help with this.

We take that responsibility seriously, and we will live up to it.

Mr President -

Respect for international humanitarian law is paramount to protecting civilians from the effects of armed conflict.

We urge parties to armed conflict to allow humanitarian aid to get through to those who need it.

New Zealand is heartened that the international community has taken steps to promote humanitarian access, including by authorising cross-border aid delivery into Syria; and we support the extension of the authorisation for that humanitarian access beyond January 2015.

New Zealand is committed to the core humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence.

These are essential to humanitarian action and for protecting humanitarian actors.
We are pleased that this year’s humanitarian resolution includes specific reference to the need to protect medical personnel, and to the ICRC’s Health Care in Danger project.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul will be a key opportunity to ensure that the humanitarian community can meet increasingly complex challenges; so New Zealand thanks the Secretary-General for this initiative, and we encourage positive engagement from all stakeholders.

Mr President –

Natural disasters continue to affect millions each year.

Our region, the Pacific is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and will be at the forefront of adapting to climate change.

More must be done to reduce the risk of natural disasters; so we call on all nations to engage fully in the Sendai Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Mr President –

New Zealand is also deeply concerned at the Ebola outbreak.

While much work remains, we’ve been heartened by the international response.

New Zealand is supporting the Ebola response with a package totalling NZ$5m.

Mr President -

New Zealand acknowledges, with sadness, Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos’ resignation.

She has been a strong and inspirational leader, and we thank her for her tireless efforts.