

Chairs, Excellencies,

New Zealand has been a member of this Forum since its launch in 2011 and we are strongly committed to its good work.

For the first time since this Forum's establishment, New Zealand attends this session carrying our own tragic experience of terrorism.

On March 15th our Muslim community was targeted while praying in mosques in the city of Christchurch – my own hometown. Fifty-one were killed and many more injured.

The attack reinforces the importance of confronting terrorism and violent extremism in all forms.

The use of violence to strike at a society's fundamental values, such as democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and the acceptance of different faiths, lifestyle choices and beliefs, cannot be tolerated.

New Zealand is not alone in feeling the impact of terrorism and violent extremism and we extend our condolences to all those who have lost loved ones in attacks.

Our Government's resolve to work with international partners against terrorism and violent extremism is only strengthened by this year's horrific events.

The attack underscores the importance of the work we all do in this Forum to bring peace and security to our citizens.

The New Zealand Government thanks the Forum's co-chairs – Morocco and the Netherlands – for your leadership. We also thank the co-chairs of the working groups for their efforts to develop meaningful and practical outputs from the Forum's initiatives.

And we welcome the new and highly relevant initiatives launched at this meeting.

Following the March 15 attack, New Zealand has undertaken a wide range of work to further reduce the risk of terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds.

We have provided support for victims, their families and the wider Muslim community in New Zealand. We are determined that New Zealand remains a safe and open society, characterised by religious tolerance and freedom.

We have embarked on an extensive review of our system settings, including legislative settings, which has already led to swift changes to gun policy.

An independent Royal Commission of Inquiry is investigating and will make recommendations for change.

And we have worked with a number of countries and major tech companies to develop the *Christchurch Call to Action* to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online.

We were pleased this week to announce progress in implementing the commitments of the Christchurch Call.

The livestreaming and subsequent widespread sharing of the video of the Christchurch terrorist attacks made clear the harm that such content causes.

Social media platforms were deliberately weaponised in a way that we have not seen before – magnifying the harm to victims and to those inadvertently exposed to the video.

The Christchurch Call is an effort to reduce that harm, outlining a series of voluntary commitments: commitments for countries, for companies, and joint commitments.

There are synergies to be found between the Christchurch Call and this Forum's work to implement the Zurich-London Recommendations on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism Online.

We welcome the launch of the Policy Toolkit later today and thank Australia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for their ongoing work in this area.

New Zealand also remains engaged in the international global counter-terrorism effort, with ongoing military training commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and support to close partners in South East Asia.

We remain concerned by the influence of Da'esh closer to New Zealand's part of the world, as it faces significant loss of territory in the Middle East.

As we move forward, New Zealand is focused on managing the risk of terrorism and violent extremism through increased understanding, collective effort and a prevention-based focus.

Our approach starts with grassroots work to build resilient and inclusive communities, including working with civil society.

Chairs, Excellencies, we are deeply grateful for the sympathy and support we have received from our friends around the world since the March 15 attack in New Zealand.

We are committed to working with all of you in this Forum in the future.

Thank you.