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Items 96 and 103 of the preliminary list\*

### Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

## Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

### Report of the Secretary-General

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\* [A/74/50](#).



## I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 10 of its resolution [73/28](#) on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution [46/30](#) and taking into account the evolving situation in the region. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of those States on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to the report of the Secretary-General of 10 October 1990 ([A/45/435](#)) or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, at its seventy-fourth session, a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. On 31 January 2019, the Office for Disarmament Affairs sent a note verbale to all Member States drawing their attention to paragraphs 10 and 11 of resolution [73/28](#) and seeking their views on the matter. Any views received after 15 May 2019 will be posted on the website of the Office ([www.un.org/disarmament](http://www.un.org/disarmament)) in the language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

3. Replies were received from the Governments of Cuba, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Mexico, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine and are reproduced in section III of the present report. A reply received from the European Union is reproduced in section IV, in accordance with the modalities set out in General Assembly resolution [65/276](#).

## II. Observations

4. In September 2018, at the sixty-second regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, members of the Group of Arab States reiterated a previous request for the inclusion of an agenda item entitled “Israeli nuclear capabilities”. However, for the third year running, those same States opted not to reintroduce a resolution under that item and expressed the hope that, in the light of the decision, their efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would be viewed favourably at the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Israel expressed regret that the agenda item had been included and called upon the Arab Group to refrain from including the item at future sessions of the General Conference.

5. At the meetings of the First Committee during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, in October 2018, States continued to demonstrate support for the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The States Members of the United Nations that are members of the League of Arab States introduced a draft decision entrusting to the Secretary-General the convening, no later than 2019, of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The draft decision was subsequently adopted as Assembly decision [73/546](#). Many States expressed support for the draft decision, pointing to the lack of progress in implementing the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.<sup>1</sup> Some States opposed the draft decision,

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<sup>1</sup> [NPT/CONF.1995/32 \(Part I\)](#), annex.

noting that it did not enjoy the consensus support of all States of the region. Subsequent to the adoption of the decision by the Assembly, and following consultations with States of the region, it was decided that the conference would be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 18 to 22 November 2019. The participating States of the Middle East region endorsed the nomination of Jordan as President-designate of the conference.

6. During the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, held in New York from 29 April to 10 May 2019, broad support was expressed for the establishment of further nuclear-weapon-free zones where they did not exist, especially in the Middle East.

7. Support was also expressed for the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, the goals and objectives of which were affirmed at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. Many States parties called for its prompt implementation. In that regard, States parties expressed divergent views on the relationship between the conference to be convened pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546 and the 2020 Review Conference.

8. Four working papers on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East were submitted for consideration at the third session of the Preparatory Committee. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in its working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.9), expressed concern over the delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and stressed that it remained valid until its goals and objectives were achieved. It also proposed elements for a recommendation by the Preparatory Committee to the 2020 Review Conference. The Group of Non-Aligned States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in its working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.19), welcomed General Assembly decision 73/546 and supported the convening of a conference pursuant to that decision. The Group of Arab States submitted a working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.20) containing several suggestions for inclusion in the Preparatory Committee's recommendations to the 2020 Review Conference. China, in its working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.38), called for the earnest implementation of relevant resolutions and decisions of successive sessions of the Assembly and of previous Review Conferences. In addition, during the second session of the Preparatory Committee, the Russian Federation stated that it would take part in the conference to be convened pursuant to Assembly decision 73/546 and called upon the other co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East<sup>2</sup> to live up to their responsibilities. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recognized its special responsibility as a co-sponsor of the 1995 resolution and expressed support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in a consensus-based manner. The United States of America expressed regret that Assembly decision 73/546 had been adopted without consensus among the States of the region.

9. Recalling that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East contains a call for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations have, since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/73/182 (Part I)), continued their joint work towards the full destruction of the declared chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. This work contributes to, among other things, the realization of such a zone. Continued engagement between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and OPCW is necessary to resolve all outstanding issues relating to the Syrian declaration under the

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<sup>2</sup> The three co-sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference are the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention).

10. Reports of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic are deeply disturbing, in particular the confirmation by the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic of the use of chemical weapons on three occasions in Lataminah in March 2017, once in Saraqib in February 2018 and once in Duma in April 2018. Against that backdrop, the non-renewal of the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism is deeply regrettable, given that it left the international community with no dedicated mechanism for attributing responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In that connection, the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention granted the secretariat of OPCW the authority to conduct such investigations. The OPCW secretariat has established an investigation and identification team that has commenced its work to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the OPCW fact-finding mission determines, or has determined, that the use or likely use occurred and in cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report.

11. As mentioned in the disarmament agenda of the Secretary-General, entitled “Securing our common future”, launched on 24 May 2018 in Geneva, the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs will work with Member States to strengthen and consolidate nuclear-weapon-free zones, including by facilitating enhanced cooperation and consultation between existing zones, encouraging nuclear-weapon States to adhere to the relevant protocols to the treaties establishing such zones and supporting the further establishment of such zones, including in the Middle East.

12. The Secretary-General is fully committed to fulfilling the mandate set out in General Assembly decision 73/546 and stresses that the realization of such a zone would be of significant value to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, as well as to regional and international peace and security. The Secretary-General underlines the need for a broad and inclusive approach that builds confidence in the process and hopes that the 2019 conference will result in some important initial progress that will have a positive impact on the 2020 Review Conference.

13. The eventual achievement of a Middle East peace settlement would contribute to the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. In that connection, all parties concerned, inside and outside the region, should seek to create such conditions. Furthermore, the United Nations continues to be ready to provide any assistance in that regard. In that context, the continued lack of prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the growing impediments to the realization of the two-State solution are deeply concerning. The continued spikes of tension in Gaza are a gruesome reminder of how fragile the situation is and how the world cannot afford further fallout from this conflict. The Secretary-General reaffirms his strong commitment to reaching a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.

### III. Replies received from Governments

#### Cuba

[Original: Spanish]  
[29 April 2019]

The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, to which Cuba is a State party, allowed that region to be the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, it has been a political, legal and institutional model for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world.

Cuba, also part of the first region formally proclaimed a “zone of peace” in January 2014, supports efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world. Although they are not an end in themselves, these zones are indeed a step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as participating States undertake not to acquire, develop or use nuclear weapons and to prevent the deployment in their respective territories of that category of weapons.

We regret that it has still not been possible to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, despite calls from the international community and the many resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The failure, in 2012 and in subsequent years, to hold a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has seriously undermined the credibility of the Treaty. It is important to recall that the Conference was an important and integral part of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference.

In that context, the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, without further delay and without preconditions, remains a priority. We hope that an agreement in that regard can be reached in the new review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2020.

We reaffirm our support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as soon as possible. This would constitute a significant step towards peace and stability, not only in that region but throughout the world, and would make an important contribution towards realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament.

That objective requires the only State of the region that has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to become a State party to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State, and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

Cuba welcomes the adoption in the First Committee and in the General Assembly, of the draft decision submitted by the Arab Group, entitled “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”, and encourages all States concerned to participate in a constructive manner.

Cuba, both in its national capacity and as a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, will continue to support the efforts to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones and will actively participate in the 2020 Review Conference of the

Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the First Committee of the General Assembly and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

## Egypt

[Original: English]

[9 May 2019]

### Introduction

The item entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East” was first included in the agenda of the General Assembly in 1974 at the request of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since then, Egypt has striven for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and has worked diligently through the Assembly and the various cycles of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons for the development of this concept and for its passage through the necessary phases. Since 1980, the Assembly has annually adopted a resolution, without a vote, reflecting the unanimous endorsement of the States Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and thereby constituting a universal common international denominator in this regard.

Accordingly, Egypt has relentlessly pursued the objective of ridding the Middle East of the threat of nuclear weapons. Regrettably, in 2018, this 38-year-long consensus on the resolution was blocked by two States, which have proven their unfathomable unwillingness to engage in open, constructive and substantive dialogue on achieving a universally agreed-upon objective, for retaliatory reasons that are not pertinent to the resolution itself in any manner.

### Achieving the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East

The main impediment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has been Israel. Egypt notes with grave concern that Israel remains the sole country in the Middle East that does not adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. While all States of the Middle East have become parties to the Treaty, Israel intentionally continues to ignore repeated calls for its adherence to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and for the placement of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreements. The refusal by Israel to adhere to the Treaty has perpetuated a volatile imbalance and, accordingly, presents a threat to regional and international peace and security.

The 2010 Review Conference addressed, in its Final Document ([NPT/CONF.2010/50 \(Vol. I\)](#)), Israel’s non-adherence to the Treaty. It recalled “the importance of Israel’s accession to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards” and reaffirmed “the urgency and importance of achieving universality of the Treaty”.

Egypt also reaffirms its support for the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and recalls that the States parties to the Treaty reiterated unanimously at the 2000 Review Conference the importance of Israel’s accession to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. The 2000 Review Conference, in the Final Document ([NPT/CONF.2000/28 \(Parts I and II\)](#)), recalled that in paragraph 4 of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, the Conference had called upon all States in the Middle East that had not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as

possible and to place their nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards. The Conference also noted, in that connection, that the report of the Secretariat on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.2000/7) stated that several States had acceded to the Treaty and that, with those accessions, all States of the region of the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, were States parties to the Treaty. The Conference welcomed the accession of those States and reaffirmed the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East.

In addition to urgent calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, including in the context of the Treaty review processes, IAEA, the General Assembly and the Security Council called upon Israel "urgently to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of IAEA" (see Council resolution 487 (1981)) and recalled "the objective of the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East" (see Council resolution 687 (1991)).

### **Implementation of the 2010 Review Conference action plan**

The 2010 Review Conference action plan clearly recognizes the Middle East resolution as an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Review Conference and as the cornerstone on which the Treaty was extended indefinitely, without a vote, in 1995. In an effort to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference the importance of a process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East was emphasized and, to that end, a number of practical steps were endorsed. Among those steps was the convening by the Secretary-General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, of "a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction". In the Final Document it was also stipulated that the 2012 conference should take as its terms of reference the 1995 resolution. In the Final Document it was also stipulated that, as a practical step, the Secretary-General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, would appoint a facilitator with a specific mandate in that regard, and would designate a host Government for the 2012 conference. This eventually took place in October 2011, almost 17 months after the adoption of the action plan.

Egypt believed that the conference in 2012 would have been a step forward towards establishing the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and expressed its intention to cooperate fully with all relevant parties, in accordance with the 2010 Final Document. The conference was intended to make a positive and meaningful contribution towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. However, the holding of the conference was not intended to be an end in itself; rather, it should have launched a sustained and serious process towards the full implementation of the 1995 resolution and the establishment of the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone, involving concrete steps and measures to be taken in this regard within specific time frames.

In this vein, Egypt reiterated the call for the prompt and full implementation of the 1995 resolution and the outcomes of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences on the Middle East, and the special responsibility that rests in this regard with the nuclear-weapon States, especially the three depositary States that co-sponsored the 1995 resolution, in addition to the Secretary-General.

In this context, Egypt regretted the postponement of the 2012 conference and considered it a breach of the obligations of the conveners of the conference vis-à-vis the international community regarding the implementation of the 1995 resolution on

the Middle East and the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference. The announcement of the unilateral postponement of the conference to an unspecified future date without even consulting with the States of the region followed the expressed commitment of all but one country in the Middle East to attend such a conference.

Egypt still rejects the excuses that were given. The postponement is a flagrant non-fulfilment of agreed commitments, representing yet another step in a long history of unimplemented decisions regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

### **Participation of Egypt in regional and cross-regional efforts**

The final communiqué of the twelfth session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Cairo on 6 and 7 February 2013, reaffirmed the continued support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and called upon Israel, as the only country in the Middle East that is not a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to accede unconditionally and without further delay to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon party and to place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. It also regretted the postponement of the 2012 conference and expressed grave concern over the failure of Israel to declare its participation in the conference, thus continuing to undermine the convening of the conference as well as the realization of the Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and expressed the sincere belief that the pretexts announced for postponing the conference were rather unrealistic, especially in relation to the provisions stated in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference. This was continuously reaffirmed through the annual resolutions on political affairs submitted to the sessions of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the most recent of which was the forty-sixth session, held in Abu Dhabi in March 2019.

In the same vein, Egypt also addresses the concerns of the conventional and non-conventional regional groups and alliances to which it belongs. Egypt dedicates due effort to addressing the collective concerns of States with regard to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This can be clearly noted through the joint statements and working papers to which Egypt contributes, whether as a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States, the Group of Arab States or the New Agenda Coalition.

### **Preparing for the 2020 Review Conference**

In the context of the Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycles, Egypt has submitted, individually or jointly, several working papers on the issue of the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, containing substantive recommendations on concrete measures and actions needed for the full implementation of the resolution, the most significant of which was a working paper entitled “Implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East” (NPT/CONF.2015/PC.II/WP.34), submitted by Tunisia on behalf of the League of Arab States for the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference, held in Geneva in 2013. In that working paper, the view of the League of Arab States on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East was fully elaborated, including all procedural and substantive issues pertaining to the convening of the conference aimed at establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Egypt considers the working paper to be an important reference document that can be used as a building block for efforts in this regard.

In its consistent efforts to achieve the goal of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, Egypt submitted to the first session of the Preparatory

Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, held in Vienna from 2 to 12 May 2017, a working paper entitled “Implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons” (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/WP.27). The working paper outlined additional and revised methods to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Those propositions worked towards a more inclusive process that was intended to encourage all States of the Middle East to begin a negotiation process, although the State chiefly targeted by the working paper refused to initiate an honest dialogue on the process itself, let alone join it.

In 2018, during the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, held in Geneva, Egypt individually submitted three working papers to the Committee that are central to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The three working papers addressed the following key issues:

- (a) Nuclear cooperation with States that are not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;
- (b) The role of nuclear weapons in security and defence doctrines;
- (c) Peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Egypt submitted the working papers in an attempt to seriously address all aspects of potential future challenges to the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone. The working papers reaffirm the importance of preserving the right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and condemning the clear contravention carried out by signatories to the Treaty in their nuclear cooperation with States that are not parties to the Treaty. Furthermore, bearing in mind the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, a matter that ties into Egypt’s goal of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, Egypt submitted a working paper expressing concern with regard to the insertion of nuclear weapons in security and defence doctrines, a challenge that poses existential threats to humanity.

Ultimately, Egypt reaffirms that the breach of the clear decision, contained in the 2010 Review Conference action plan, to hold a conference in 2012 is yet another failure to implement a key Treaty commitment. As a strong supporter of the Treaty regime, Egypt is extremely concerned about the ramifications of the non-fulfilment of commitments for the credibility and sustainability of the regime, which was extended indefinitely on the basis of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The States parties to the Treaty, the Secretary-General, IAEA and the Treaty community at large should all bear their responsibility in this regard to uphold international legitimacy.

**Participation of Egypt in preparing for the implementation of the General Assembly decision to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction**

The failure to convene a conference in 2012 to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in accordance with the 2010 Review Conference action plan, which was adopted by consensus, led to a frustrating impasse with regard to achieving the decades-old stated goal of Egypt and the Group of Arab States. That frustration was only aggravated by the paradoxical opposition of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada to reaching consensus at the 2015 Review Conference on new measures regarding the implementation of the 1995 resolution through the Final Document of the Review Conference. Despite the attempts of Egypt and the Group of Arab States to reach a final outcome document outlining novel and innovative ways to make further progress with regard to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the United States,

the United Kingdom and Canada decided to block progress on the document, thereby contravening the Treaty and clearly failing to comply with their obligations under the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Accordingly, the decision by the Arab Group to approach the General Assembly to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction was an inevitable outcome of the deliberately sustained impasse and an attempt to reduce mounting pressures therein. As a result, the principle of consensus was more explicit in the decision adopted by the Assembly than in the Final Document of the Review Conference adopted by consensus in 2010. Moreover, the clear stipulation that the process of elaborating a treaty to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction will necessitate that the States involved “freely arrive” at their own conclusions regarding the establishment of such a zone enshrines the principle of respect for the sovereignty of each State party. In addition, the principles of inclusiveness and voluntariness were enshrined in both a prudent and balanced manner in the very decision that called on the Secretary-General to convene a conference in 2019 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In the implementation of General Assembly decision 73/546, Egypt, as well as the Group of Arab States, accords particular attention to the role of the Secretary-General and deems it necessary that he undertake, during the forthcoming phase, specific actions directed towards the goal of the decision, namely, the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Cognizant of the needs and concerns of the States parties involved, in addition to demonstrating the commitment of Arab States to the inclusiveness of the 2019 conference, the Group of Arab States has chosen a mechanism that allows all States of the Middle East to assume the presidency of the conference, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The Group has thereby ensured that all States involved in the 2019 conference and its subsequent sessions are truly invested in the process by giving them true ownership of the process itself, a procedure that has not been realized in any other process aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

## **Conclusion**

Egypt firmly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in areas of conflict contributes significantly to easing tensions, confidence-building, preventing conflict and developing peaceful relations and mutual cooperation. Egypt believes that the only criterion for the commencement of negotiations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the existence of political will, whether among States in the region or parties that have a direct stake in ensuring its security and stability.

The existence of political will among all States parties to the Treaty, including all States parties in the region, has been manifested through their adoption, by consensus, of a process leading to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This manifestation of commitment by States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty needs to be implemented promptly through a clear agenda, under the auspices of the United Nations and after consulting with all parties concerned. Egypt looks forward to an earnest cooperative process with the Secretary-General and the depositary States in undertaking the agreed measures necessary to pave the way for the successful commencement of negotiations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East through the 2019 conference to be convened in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546.

The success of such negotiations would represent a serious breakthrough in efforts geared towards regaining security in a region currently facing a number of potential proliferation threats that provoke further insecurity and ensuing arms races, thereby presenting existential security challenges. Egypt expresses its intention to cooperate actively with all parties in an effort to safeguard the Middle East against all nuclear threats through a comprehensive and balanced approach that can ensure the security of all States of the region against nuclear dangers through the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, Egypt reaffirms that it will, against all odds, consistently continue to strive, individually, as well as in the regional and international context, for a nuclear-weapon-free world, owing to its strong conviction that such weapons pose a grave danger to the very existence of mankind.

### **Iran (Islamic Republic of)**

[Original: English]  
[8 March 2019]

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East – a proposal originally presented by Iran in 1974.

The international community has consistently recognized the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as an important measure to enhance peace and security in the region. Iran expresses its deep concern over the lack of progress in the establishment of such a zone.

The Israeli regime, by possessing nuclear weapons and refusing to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, continues to be the main obstacle to the establishment of such a zone.

The underlying driving force for the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East was a shared concern among the States parties to the Treaty regarding the grave danger and threat that the nuclear weapons programme of Israel poses to the security and stability of the Middle East and beyond, as well as the objective of global non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Peace and stability cannot be achieved in this volatile region as long as the Israeli nuclear arsenal exists. Since its inception, the Israeli regime has waged 17 wars; committed aggression against all its neighbours; threatened to use force against countries in the region; and continued to occupy the territories of several neighbouring countries. On 29 August 2018, the Prime Minister of Israel, speaking at its underground nuclear weapons development centre, Dimona, explicitly threatened Iran with nuclear annihilation.

Furthermore, the Israeli regime continues to block all international and regional diplomatic efforts for the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Such realities make it abundantly clear that, in order to make progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the international community, in particular the depositary States of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which are also the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, should exert sustained pressure on the Israeli regime to compel it to accede to the Treaty without any precondition or further delay and as a non-nuclear weapon party, and to place all of its nuclear activities and facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

It is clear that the Israeli intransigence and defiance of international norms and rules are not viable without the blind support of the United States. The United States

should refrain from undertaking any measures that preclude the achievement of the objective of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East continues to exist as long as the United States continues to appease the illicit nuclear weapons programme of Israel, which is the real source of proliferation in the region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to support meaningful steps aimed at making progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in appropriate international forums, including the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as well as the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, to be convened by the Secretary-General in 2019.

In this regard, Iran stresses the essential role of the United Nations in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and expects the Secretary-General to vigorously continue his efforts to promote this objective and to reaffirm the need for the accession of Israel – without any precondition or further delay and as a non-nuclear-weapon party – to the Treaty as a meaningful step towards realizing the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

## **Israel**

[Original: English]  
[13 May 2019]

I would like to use this opportunity to share Israel's explanation of vote:<sup>3</sup>

It took a long time and considerable international efforts to reach consensus on the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

Even though Israel had its own deep reservations about the resolution, which have been voiced every year in our explanations of position, Israel supported the resolution for the sake of consensus, as Israel's consistent approach has always been constructive.

It is very unfortunate that this long-standing practice is about to be broken by the Arab Group. By imposing a new, unilateral and destructive resolution entitled "Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction", the Arab Group has altered the status quo.

Furthermore, as our position was stated in the general debate and in the nuclear cluster discussions, under these circumstances, from now on Israel will not cooperate with regional arms control initiatives.

We regret that we do not see the same enthusiasm among the advocates of this resolution to solve the real threats and challenges of the Middle East.

## **Mexico**

[Original: Spanish]  
[15 May 2019]

Mexico reiterates its support for the efforts towards the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in contribution to the process of nuclear non-proliferation,

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<sup>3</sup> Statement made by Israel at the meeting of the First Committee held on 1 November 2018, during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

as participating States undertake not to develop, acquire or use nuclear weapons and to prevent the deployment in their respective territories of such weapons belonging to other States. In that regard, militarily denuclearized zones are not an end in themselves but an intermediate step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In the case of the Middle East, Mexico has supported the efforts of the international community to that effect, not only in the General Assembly, but also in deliberative bodies of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the appropriate forums for consideration of the issue. In that regard, Mexico considers it vital to invite countries that have not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to do so.

Mexico also believes that making progress on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is an important component of the commitments behind the 1995 agreement on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the agreements reached at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, as it would help to reduce tensions in the region and to create a climate of peace and security, as well as furthering the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons in that same region.

Mexico hopes that the fourth Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia can be held during the review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2020, as its convening constitutes a necessary effort towards restoring the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, while helping to build confidence between the parties to the Treaty.

Mexico, both individually and together with other countries, will continue to support efforts to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones at the tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in the First Committee of the General Assembly and within the IAEA framework, in addition to reiterating its offer to share its experience and lessons learned during the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## **Syrian Arab Republic**

[Original: Arabic]  
[15 May 2019]

The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world is an important step towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It is not, however, an end in itself: it is a means towards the goals of achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, consolidating peace and security regionally and internationally and preserving the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes the fundamental role of the United Nations in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East on the basis of the resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council, IAEA and the review conferences of the parties to the Treaty.

The Syrian Arab Republic firmly believes that the possession of nuclear weapons by any State or acquisition of those weapons by non-State actors or terrorist groups threatens international peace and security. It was one of the first States in the Middle East to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in 1968. It has affirmed, in all international forums, its continuing commitment to its international undertakings under the Treaty, which it considers the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and an international reference that accords the States parties

the inalienable right to acquire nuclear technology for use in various peaceful applications.

The Syrian Arab Republic recalls that, in April 2003, when it was a member of the Security Council, it submitted an initiative to rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, certain influential States on the Security Council took positions that blocked that initiative. In December 2003, the Syrian Arab Republic put that initiative forward again, with a Security Council draft resolution in blue. However, the United States of America threatened to veto the draft resolution in order to exempt Israel from the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

By acceding to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Syrian Arab Republic has demonstrated its commitment to the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, in the Middle East. It has given the lie to pretexts used by Israel to avoid the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that it is gravely concerned by the obstacles placed by Israel in the way of making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons. Israel continues to refuse to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State and to place all its nuclear activities under the supervision of IAEA, in contravention of all relevant internationally recognized resolutions of the Security Council, in particular Security Council resolution [487 \(1981\)](#), and resolutions of the General Assembly, IAEA and the review conferences of the parties to the Treaty.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the only way to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and reduce the risks of the proliferation of nuclear weapons is for Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State and place all its nuclear activities and facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

In that connection, the Syrian Arab Republic is concerned at the lack of progress towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, as well as the action plan on the Middle East adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty.

The Syrian Arab Republic affirms the need to uphold the statement in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty. That Document recognized that the 1995 Middle East resolution remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved, and that it is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

The Syrian Arab Republic recalls that the resolution to extend the Treaty indefinitely, which was adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, would not have been possible had it not been for the understanding reached at that time whereby the nuclear-weapon States committed to a review of the concerns of many States parties in the Middle East region, particularly the need to pressure Israel to accede to the Treaty, unconditionally place all its facilities under comprehensive safeguards without further delay and eliminate all its military nuclear capabilities, which are not subject to international supervision, in order to pave the way for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Syrian Arab Republic regrets the failure to convene the 2012 international conference called for in the Final Document of the 2010 Treaty Review Conference. That conference was to have been attended by all States of the Middle East and was to have addressed the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other

weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Syrian Arab Republic likewise rejects all the pretexts put forward at that time by the United States, in its capacity as a depositary State of the Treaty and one of the sponsors of the 2012 conference, to explain the failure to convene that conference. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses yet again that the Security Council has a responsibility, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 487 (1981), to put pressure on Israel with a view to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, particularly since the depositary States of the Treaty are permanent members of the Security Council, and in order to compel Israel to accede to the Treaty, abandon all its nuclear arsenals and their means of delivery and place all its nuclear activities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

The Syrian Arab Republic rejects attempts to argue that the responsibility of the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East should be borne by the States of the region because the latter are responsible for establishing regional conditions. Such attempts are incompatible with the 1995 resolution and with the commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. The Syrian Arab Republic therefore stresses that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone is an essential commitment of the international community, in particular of States parties to the Treaty, and calls upon all States to uphold that commitment.

The idea that the Review Conferences are not the appropriate forum for addressing the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East ignores the fact that the indefinite extension of the Treaty without a vote was based on the 1995 resolution and was reaffirmed at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. Promotion of that idea damages the credibility of the Treaty. It also encourages Israel to continue derailing the process to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East and to refuse to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear State and place all its facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses the importance of the 2020 Review Conference taking practical steps towards negotiations aimed at the speedy implementation of the 1995 resolution.

The Syrian Arab Republic welcomes the adoption of General Assembly decision 73/546 on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and calls for its speedy implementation. At the same time, it stresses that decision 73/546 does not contravene, revoke or replace the agreed outcomes of the Review Conferences, nor will it affect the practical steps that need to be taken at the 2020 Review Conference to ensure the implementation of the 1995 resolution. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that they are parallel and complementary processes both aimed at establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In this context, the Syrian Arab Republic deeply deplores the announcement by the United States and Israel of their intention not to participate in the conference to be held in 2019 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its decision 73/546 on convening a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The purpose of that announcement by the United States is to support Israel in its refusal to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear party and to place its nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

The Syrian Arab Republic notes that successive United States Administrations, including the current Administration, have missed no opportunity to demonstrate their blind allegiance to Israel and their hostility to any initiative to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, including by voting against General Assembly resolution 73/28 on the establishment

of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, which had long been adopted by consensus.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses the obligation of nuclear-weapon States under article I of the Treaty to undertake not to transfer to Israel any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or any direct or indirect control of such weapons or devices, and not to assist, encourage or induce Israel in any way whatsoever to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or gain control over such weapons or explosive devices.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East should in no way be linked to the peace process in the region. The Syrian Arab Republic also reiterates that any identification of the countries in the Middle East region for this purpose in no way constitutes a definition of the region.

The Syrian Arab Republic again reiterates its willingness to cooperate with the Secretary-General for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

## **Ukraine**

[Original: English]  
[15 May 2019]

Ukraine has been a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons since 1994 as a non-nuclear State. During its 25 years of membership, Ukraine has been fulfilling its obligations in accordance with the provisions of this international legal instrument. Furthermore, Ukraine keeps undertaking and efficiently implementing additional obligations in the framework of nuclear security summits. In particular, Ukraine refused to use highly enriched uranium and removed all of its stocks from its territory. In the course of the Washington Nuclear Security Summit, held in March and April 2016, Ukraine, at the highest political level, reconfirmed its commitment to the principles of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as a leading State in this process.

Ukraine supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. This position was confirmed by Ukraine at a high political level at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as during the three sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference. Moreover, given the current volatile situation in this region, Ukraine considers the establishment of such a nuclear-weapon-free zone to be a matter of priority.

## **IV. Reply received from the European Union**

[Original: English]  
[15 May 2019]

The European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, as set out in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. This was reconfirmed in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, in which the European Union and its member States, together with all the countries from the Middle East and North African region, committed themselves to the pursuit of “a mutually and effectively verifiable Middle East Zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems”. The European Union considers the 1995 resolution valid until

its goals and objectives are achieved, in line with the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The European Union maintains the view that dialogue and building confidence among stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree on arrangements for a meaningful conference, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them, as decided by the 2010 Review Conference. The European Union has consistently presented this position at the United Nations, including in recent discussions related to concrete proposals on how to take the process forward.

The European Union confirms its readiness to assist the process leading to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, as it has done in the past by facilitating dialogue among States of the region. The European Union remains prepared to help in bringing the process forward by organizing seminars and meetings, as was done in 2011 and in 2012, respectively. For this reason, the European Union is in the process of launching a project aimed at enhancing confidence-building through a number of seminars, workshops and research projects, the aim of which is to reach a deeper collective understanding of the successes and failures related to previous efforts, and which would eventually allow for ideas on new avenues and proposals leading to a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The project is expected to begin in 2019 and last for three years. Furthermore, the Principal Adviser and Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament of the European Union continues to be at the disposal of the process and is ready to continue to meet and engage with all States in the region to explore how to strengthen and promote the process.

The European Union also confirms its readiness to continue to assist the Middle East region, through the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative, which was launched in response to the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of countries outside the European Union to mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks. The centres of excellence established in Jordan, Algeria, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates all contribute to enhanced capacity-building in the region.

The European Union continues to call upon all States in the region that have not yet done so to accede to and abide by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, the Additional Protocol and, as applicable, a modified Small Quantities Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Also, subscribing to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation could contribute to regional confidence-building, which is necessary for progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.