



Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt

to the United Nations in New York

Remarks by Egypt

**High-Level Plenary Meeting to Commemorate and Promote the
International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

Tuesday 26 September 2017

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Mr. President,

Allow me, at the outset, to express our appreciation for your efforts to convene this meeting to commemorate this important occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Our meeting today comes at a time when the world witnesses new heights for the threat of the actual use of nuclear weapons and the conduct of nuclear tests.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

On 21 September 2017, the United Nations Security Council held a Ministerial level meeting on the topic of Nonproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Allow me to quote from the statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Sameh Shoukry, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, before that meeting:

Mr. President,

Egypt has always been at the forefront of multilateral efforts aiming at disarmament and nonproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), which continue to represent one of the most pressing threats to humanity and to international peace and security...

Egypt reiterates its concern over the grave threat posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, and we reaffirm that the total, verifiable, and irreversible elimination of such weapons represents the ultimate guarantee against their proliferation, and the ultimate warranty against their use by States or non-State actors. Attaining this goal largely depends on the implementation by the Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS) of their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and leading the efforts towards the achievement of universal adherence to this treaty, which continues to represent the cornerstone of international security and the core of today's disarmament and nonproliferation architecture.

Mr. President,

In spite of the evident and tangible progress achieved in the area of nonproliferation, progress towards nuclear disarmament continues to be held hostage to construed conceptions pertaining to strategic stability. It is time for us, Members of the United Nations, to have an honest and inclusive discussion on the validity and consistency of those arguments which imply that the possession of nuclear weapons and the reliance on nuclear deterrence contribute to international security and stability. In fact, a closer look at the contemporary nonproliferation challenges, including country-specific cases, would clearly reveal that these challenges, one way or another, stem from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the discriminatory nature of the nonproliferation regime, which undermines its credibility and effectiveness.

There is no doubt that in a world free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, the United Nations and the Security Council would have been much better positioned to address nonproliferation threats and cases of noncompliance in a more credible and nondiscriminatory manner. Practice has shown that it is quite illusive to address nonproliferation while disregarding disarmament, or to selectively tackle cases of noncompliance while deliberately ignoring achieving the universality of the NPT.

Several recent remarkable developments, such as the adoption of the “Humanitarian Pledge”, as well as a landmark treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, are clear signs that the circumstances have changed on the international stage. These are clear messages that those Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) who have truly committed themselves to the principle of disarmament and nonproliferation, are becoming increasingly impatient regarding the necessity of seriously addressing the gaps in the prevailing regime, and the discrimination embedded therein, which was not intended to last forever at the time the NPT was negotiated and entered into force.

Mr. President,

Despite the extremely volatile nature of its region, Egypt proved its good intentions by becoming a party to the NPT and fully implementing its obligations in recognition of the vital role of the NPT in international security. We took these decisions in good faith because we value human life and international peace. Furthermore, Egypt has always actively supported and implemented all Security Council resolutions aiming at addressing country-specific proliferation concerns without discrimination, as well as combating the acquisition of WMDs by non-State actors...

Nevertheless, the Middle East regrettably continues to be one of the most evident examples of the threats that the nonproliferation regime is facing, and the selective manner in which nonproliferation threats have been approached.

Therefore, unsurprisingly, the region witnesses an unprecedented level of frustration, especially among Arab countries, due to the repeated failures in implementing the agreed undertaking to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs as reflected in the Resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 NPT Review Conference, which represents an integral part of the Decision on the indefinite extension of the treaty. We remain greatly disappointed by the decision of three States Parties to the NPT to block consensus on the final document of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which further undermines the credibility of the treaty.

Finally, Mr. President, Egypt continues to strongly believe that the Goal of Global Zero is not only attainable but also necessary for the maintenance of international security and stability. Collective security for all is now, more than ever, a necessary requirement to achieve the kind of sustainable peace and development that we owe to future generations.

Thank you Mr. President.