

**Statement by H.E. Mohammad Javad Zarif
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran
At the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly
to Promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
New York, 26 September 2017**

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by thanking you for convening this meeting and your statement. I also associate myself with the NAM statement delivered by the honorable foreign minister of Venezuela.

Promotion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which was proposed by H.E. President Rouhani of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement in 2013, is indeed the promotion of the main purpose of the United Nations i.e. “To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace”. This is also in line with the realization of the objective of the very first resolution of this Assembly that called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Over the past seven decades, the existence of nuclear weapons has been the most serious challenge to the international peace and security. Despite the cessation of nuclear arms race for some years in the past, recently we hear alarming announcement by a nuclear-weapon State that it intends to continuously strengthen and expand its nuclear arsenal to ensure its place at the “top of the pack”. Such a statement is a clear indication of, and an explicit invitation to, the start of a *new nuclear arms race*.

Yet, the ongoing plans and activities of almost all nuclear-weapon possessors for the modernization of their nuclear weapon arsenals and the development, by a certain nuclear-weapon State, of mini-nukes, which, by reducing the threshold for their use, increases the possibility of their use, are other alarming trend indicating the start of a *new nuclear arms modernization race*.

These trends would further deteriorate the international peace and security and definitely deepen the already existing frustration of non-nuclear-weapon States. While nuclear-weapon States are primarily responsible for the elimination of their nuclear arsenals, the non-nuclear-weapon States shall not remain indifferent towards the 47-year non-compliance of nuclear-weapon States with their explicit nuclear disarmament obligations.

Promotion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons is a valuable means in this regard, through which the States demonstrate their political will to pursue the realization of the noble objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Similarly, non-nuclear-weapon States need to contribute to the work of the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament in 2018 and the Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT in 2020 towards taking concrete actions to rectify this situation.

In this context, I would like to refer to the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination, and the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was indeed a collective protest to the violation of obligations and unequivocal commitments of the nuclear-weapon States on nuclear disarmament.

As an active participant in that conference, Iran voted in favor of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and will continue to support its overall objective. Contrary to some arguments that this treaty will undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Iran is of the view that it will reinforce the nuclear disarmament regime. Indeed, what have undermined so far and continue to undermine the realization of the objectives of the NPT is nearly 50-year non-compliance of the nuclear-weapon States with their nuclear disarmament obligations under its article VI.

Iran stresses that Article VI obligations are quite clear and its implementation is neither optional nor conditional to such concepts as “strategic stability” or “international security environment”. The Treaty contains two explicit obligations: the obligation to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons and the obligation to disarm nuclear weapons entirely. They are inherently linked and designed to serve one objective i.e. no one should have nuclear weapons. We warn that non-implementation of article VI will continue to challenge the very foundation of the NPT, tarnish its credibility and undermining its effectiveness.

While we need to work towards reversing the current trends, we should also make every effort to ensure the universalization of the NPT. It is of outmost importance in our region that the nuclear weapons of the only non-party to the NPT, namely Israel, continue to threaten the region and beyond.

Mr. President

As a longstanding member of NPT, the Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no effort for its protection and sturdy implementation. This persistent contribution to the Non-proliferation regime did not cease even when a fabricated crisis inflicted huge trouble on my country and stringent political and economic pressure were exerted against Iranian nation. In order to overcome such an unnecessary crisis, the Islamic Republic of Iran chose to enter into negotiations with E3/EU+3 in good faith which resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA, as a successful model of dialogue and a historical achievement of diplomacy, has delivered on its purposes for the past two years. This has occurred mainly due to genuine commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the JCPOA, as verified and reported by 8 consecutive IAEA reports. The international community has a shared responsibility to support the implementation of the JCPOA which has been endorsed by the UNSCR 2231. The JCPOA has positively contributed to preservation of NPT and its full implementation by all its participants will prove to be a lasting credit for diplomacy.

To conclude, I would to emphasize that working towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons is a legal. political and moral responsibility. We need to take this responsibility responsibly and continue our collective efforts resolutely. On its part, Iran will continue to remain a strong supporter of nuclear disarmament.

Thank you Mr. President