Mr. Chairman,

Egypt aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab Group related to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Egypt is of the view that the establishment of a WMD free zone in the Middle East should remain a central topic in the current NPT review cycle, not only because of its political and security merits, but more importantly, because the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East was an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference on the basis of which the NPT was indefinitely extended.

My delegation stands ready to engage in good faith, once again, with all delegations that are sincere in their endeavors to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and to cooperate with them with the energy and commitment this issue deserves.

Mr. Chairman,

The delay in the implementation of the 1995 Resolution has eroded the credibility of the NPT and may potentially represent yet another setback in the NPT review process. We must ensure that this issue receives commitment to guarantee a meaningful and successful outcome of the 2020 NPT Review Conference. I would like to underline that the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences emphasized the importance of the Resolution on the Middle East and affirmed its goals and objectives. They stressed that the Resolution remains valid until the goals and objectives are achieved.

The 2020 Review Conference therefore, should adopt clear modalities and practical steps on launching negotiations aimed at the prompt implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. We stress the special responsibility of the three co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution of the Middle East to implement the Resolution. In this regard, we would like to highlight that the Non-Aligned Movement has put forward a clear proposal on modalities to launch negotiations on the implementation of the 1995 Resolution based on consensus and arrangements freely arrived at by the states of the region as contained in working paper NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.16
Mr. Chairman,

Egypt stresses the urgency and importance of the early realization of universal adherence to the NPT. We call on all States, in particular in the Middle East, that had not yet done so to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States so as to achieve its universality at an early date. In this line, we recall that the 1995, 2000, and 2010 Review Conferences reaffirmed the importance of Israel’s accession to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Regrettably, no progress has been achieved so far with regard to Israel’s accession to the Treaty. Despite the collective adherence by every Arab state to the Treaty, Israel remains the only country that rejects accession to the NPT. At a time when the international community works to address other regional nonproliferation cases, it is essential that issues related to nonproliferation are addressed comprehensively.

Egypt demands that the ongoing NPT review cycle calls on Israel to accede to the NPT without any precondition or further delay as a non-nuclear weapon State, place promptly all its nuclear facilities under the IAEA full-scope safeguards in accordance with Security Council Resolution 487 (1981) and conduct all its nuclear-related activities in full conformity with the non-proliferation regime, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Attempts to create linkages between the establishment of the free zone in the Middle East with a number of issues that fall clearly beyond the capacity of the NPT review process to address is not only unconstructive, it hinders possible future progress on establishing the zone. The 1995 Resolution should remain the primary terms of reference and the scope of issues limited to the contents of the 1995 Resolution.

It is for this reason that my delegation is struck by the proposal suggested by one of the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution in one of its working papers related to the issue of the establishment of a WMD free zone in the Middle East. The ideas raised by that delegation in its working paper goes far beyond the scope of the 1995 Resolution and comprises a set of issues which incapacitates the NPT review cycle to address the WMD free zone in the Middle East, rather than benefit it. Astonishingly,
the working paper goes as far as claiming that the “NPT review cycle is ill suited to resolving” the issue of the Middle East, in total disregard of that delegation’s co-sponsorship of the 1995 resolution and the consensus agreed upon by all NPT state parties of the centrality of the issue of the WMD zone in the Middle East within the NPT review conference. This approach can jeopardize the success of the ongoing review cycle and risk another failure which we aspire to avoid in order to preserve the credibility of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

There is a collective responsibility to ensure that the 1995 Resolution is implemented. Disregarding previous obligations not only puts review cycles under stress, it erodes the credibility of the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament nonproliferation regime.

Thank you.