

**Statement by the Delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt at the Conference
on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and
Other Weapons of Mass Destruction**

**First Session
New York, 18-22 November 2019
Opening Remarks**

Madam President,

My delegation would like to strongly welcome the convening of the first session of this Conference, which represents a momentous event that we have been awaiting for decades to establish a serious process with the aim of implementing the numerous international resolutions related to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in the Middle East.

We extend our sincere congratulations to you on the assumption of your duties as President of the Conference and would like to highlight, at the outset, that we might not have reached this level of progress in activating this nascent process without your tireless and distinguished efforts. We fully appreciate and support these efforts and trust that they will yield the results we all aspire to.

I would also like to commend the United Nations Secretary General, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) for their remarkable efforts which have reflected the due attention this important process deserves and keenness to achieve its goals.

Furthermore, I would like to express our deep appreciation for those States who have responded positively to the invitation to take part in this Conference, as well as the relevant international organizations present here today.

Madam President,

The elements contained in the opening statement of the Secretary General reflect the importance of this historic event that we regard as a major breakthrough in the international approach towards this goal.

The first session of this important Conference is held at a time of unprecedented security challenges facing everyone in the Middle East. This requires all of us to ensure that this Conference is utilized as a multi-year process to advance the establishment of a stable security architecture which achieves mutual and cooperative security for all.

While we regret the absence of one State from the region from this session, we have to take advantage of the presence of all other States of the region, together with four of the five Nuclear Weapon States at an international forum that allows the concerns of all parties to be addressed in a transparent and frank manner and within a framework of constructive cooperation and confidence-building.

Madam President,

International peace and security have not been and will not be achieved through policies of deterrence and arms races. Efforts on disarmament and arms control, particularly with regard to WMDs, should not be contingent upon the attainment of ideal political and security conditions.

For its part, Egypt will strive throughout the deliberations to present realistic and practical proposals regarding the achievement of the objectives of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which are neither impossible to attain nor hindered by any technical obstacles that cannot be overcome.

We should take into consideration that we are not starting from scratch. There are already international agreements addressing WMDs in their three categories, and there are previous agreements on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones which have all proven their ability over several decades to achieve their respective objectives successfully.

It is worth mentioning that many such treaties were negotiated without the participation of a number of parties at the beginning, and that did not prevent the negotiations from being continued and completed or the non-participating parties from joining the negotiations or acceding to the treaties at a later stage. Examples of such cases are plenty.



The Permanent Mission of Egypt
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New York

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In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that we are participating in this Conference with a fully open and positive mindset towards the ideas which might be put forward by all parties and without prior judgments regarding the form and content of the treaty which we hope will be reached.

I also assure you, Madam President, that my delegation will fully cooperate with you and with all delegations and will diligently and sincerely exert all possible efforts in order to reach the desired outcomes to save our present and preserve our common future.

Thank you Madam President.

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