



Statement of
ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

before

The First Committee
Thematic Debate on
Nuclear Weapons

71st Session
United Nations General Assembly

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Check against delivery

شكراً سيدي الرئيس ... بداية أود أن أعرب عن خالص التعازي إلى وفد تايلاند اصديق في الوفاة الصادمة لملك البلاد. لقد ظل الفقيد في نظر المجتمع الدولي رمزاً للأمة التايلاندية جمعاء.

إن الوفد المصري يود أن يعبر عن تأييده لبيانات كل من "حركة عدم الانحياز" و"المجموعة العربية" و"دول تحالف الأجنحة الجديدة" في الشق المتعلق بالأسلحة النووية الذي نحن بصدد.

السيد الرئيس، معذرة لاستكمال بقية بيان جمهورية مصر العربية باللغة الإنجليزية نظراً للطبيعة الفنية الخاصة لهذا الموضوع الهام.

Mr. Chair,

Egypt expresses its concern at the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, and reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which represents the primary objective of the NPT, is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This objective is dependent upon the implementation by the nuclear-weapon States through their obligations under article VI of the NPT and the achievement of universal adherence to the Treaty. Therefore, the negotiations of a phased program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified timeframe, including a comprehensive "nuclear weapons convention", is necessary and should commence without any further delay.

In this regard, Egypt underlines the importance of having the timely and essential negotiations within the context of the fruitful outcomes and unprecedented achievement of the "Open Ended Working Group" on nuclear disarmament held lately in Geneva aiming to mobilize the international community towards more action-oriented approach to reach "Global Zero" through a legally binding universal instrument.

Egypt has repeatedly demanded the implementation of the 13 Practical Steps, agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference as well as the 2010 Action Plan, yet the lack of the required political will to implement such commitments preserved the continued risks of nuclear weapons and what they represent as a real and present threat to international peace & security.

Mr. Chair,

It is important to reiterate that the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 did not mean, in any way, allowing NWS to continue to possess nuclear weapons indefinitely. Any such assumption would be contrary to the spirit and letter of the Treaty as well as its main objective.

Egypt expresses concern towards the increasing tendency of NWS to develop new types of nuclear weapons, conduct studies and research into modernizing its nuclear armament systems, rather than unifying international efforts to achieve the universality of the NPT, as the cornerstone. And this is precisely why Egypt rejects the September joint statement by the NWS in this regard.

Mr. Chair,

Egypt has strived for over four decades to free the Middle East from nuclear weapons – as a top priority of its foreign policy – understanding the danger posed by such weapons, particularly with the continued monopoly of Israel in the region possessing nuclear arsenals (i.e. the weapons/warheads & their various delivery systems), outside any inspection or IAEA verification regime, which undermines regional security and threatens Arab national security.

Although more than twenty years have passed since the adoption of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, as a basis for the indefinite extension package of the NPT, the Resolution on the Middle East has remained far from implementation, due to the lack of sufficient efforts by its co-sponsor States, as well as the unilateral announcement on the indefinite postponement of the 2012 Conference (designated to be held in Helsinki at that time, but never happened and the international community is still waiting to witness this crucial conference). This shocking postponement was decided by just one Nuclear Weapon State without an acceptable excuse and without consultation with States of the region.

Nevertheless, Egypt and the Arab Group spared no effort to interact positively with all relevant proceedings, and actively participated in meetings convened in Vienna, Glion and Geneva in 2013 & 2014. Yet regrettably, the positive Arab interaction was faced with unjustified exercise of VETO power to block the procedures as well as the substantive negotiations, in the absence of a clear role by the United Nations, and in contradiction of 2010 NPT mandate.

The ultimate way forward is highlighted in the working paper adopted by the NAM at the 2015 NPT Review Conference (it will be attached with the longer version of this statement on Papersmart), which called upon the Review Conference to assign the Secretary-General of the United Nations to invite ALL States of the Middle East to convene a Conference aimed at the establishment of the Zone. The Conference is meant launch a political and technical process to negotiate a regional Treaty,

according to which the zone free from nuclear weapons & all other weapons of mass destruction will be established, and States of the region will be joining the Treaty if they decide to do so.

Convening the Middle East Conference, based on consensus principle, is considered an opportunity – perhaps the last – to regain the credibility of the NPT and the entire disarmament regime. This is precisely the way forward to which we still stick and attach ourselves within the context of the two annual resolutions on the Middle East (The Egyptian resolution titled “Establishment of a NWFZ in the region of the Middle East as well as the Arab resolution titled “The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East”). Indeed, we seek the traditional support of the international community to both resolutions.

Mr. Chair,

There is evermore growing interest in the issue of the humanitarian and environmental consequences resulting from the use of nuclear weapons. It is not surprising to that the three conferences convened on this issue as well as two UNGA resolutions last year have concluded that the use of nuclear weapons, or their testing, have catastrophic consequences on humans, the environment, and development, as well as the urgent need to fill the legal gap to ban and prohibit nuclear weapons comprehensively and universally.

Mr. Chair,

Based on Egypt's role and interest in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues, Egypt will continue to exert its utmost efforts to arrive at a fair and comprehensive agreement during the Committee proceedings, providing the foundation for a new phase of collective international efforts towards the realization of world free from nuclear weapons.

Thank you