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**Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran
at the First Committee's Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons
17 October 2016**

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

Mr. Chairman,

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

Global demand for total elimination of nuclear weapons continues to be the highest priority of the international community.

Since 24 January 1946, when the very first resolution of the General Assembly unanimously called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, international community made some progress, examples of which are the conclusion of the NPT, the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, and the quantitative reduction of nuclear weapons.

However, still there are thousands of nuclear weapons that can destroy the whole planet, hence, they continue to pose the greatest threat to entire humanity. This leaves us with no choice other than continuing our efforts vigorously to abolish all nuclear weapons before they abolish us all.

To do so, we need to identify the present challenges of nuclear disarmament and the most effective way to realize it.

In our view, currently, the main challenges are as follows:

First) *Quality v. quantity.* Quantitatively, the number of existing nuclear weapons are much less than the Cold War era. Qualitatively, however, the destructive power of current nuclear weapons is not less than that era, because the yield of existing nuclear weapons has been increased from kilotons to megatons - through replacing of A-bombs with H-bombs, which are thousands of times more destructive than A-bombs.

Second) *Modernization.* All nuclear-weapon possessors continue to modernize and upgrade their nuclear weapon arsenals, and certain nuclear-weapon States

have plans to develop new types of such weapons.

Third) *Nuclear postures.* Nuclear weapons still continue to have significant role in the military doctrines of their possessors, which justify the use of such weapons by resorting to concepts such as “defending the vital interests” of a nuclear-weapon State or its “allies and partners”.

Fourth) *Mini nukes.* Development of new types of easy-to-use tactical nuclear weapons has increased the possibility of their use.

Fifth) *Nuclear-weapon-sharing.* Actual proliferation of nuclear weapons through the nuclear-weapon-sharing between nuclear-weapon States themselves or between them and non-nuclear-weapon States continues to exist, in clear defiance of explicit obligations of all those countries under Articles I and II of the NPT.

Sixth) *An incomplete test ban Treaty.* After 20 years, CTBT, with all its imperfections, is still in limbo. The first country who signed this Treaty and still fails to ratify it, continues to defy its object and purpose by resorting to “today’s modern world of virtual capacity, computerization and artificial intelligence”.

Seventh) *lack of progress on nuke-free Middle East.* Despite over 40 years of international efforts, there is no hope for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East due only to the stubborn objections of the Israeli regime, which is the only non-NPT party in the region. The inability of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to adopt a final document was mainly due to pressure of this regime, whose nuclear weapons continue to threaten regional peace and security. This situation cannot be sustained and the Israeli regime must be compelled to accede, as a non-nuclear weapon party and without any condition or further delay, to the NPT.

Eighth) *NPT’s non-universality.* Failure of the NPT in gaining the universal characteristic continues to seriously challenge its effectiveness. As “zero” is called as “the only safe number of nuclear weapons on the planet”, in our view, “zero is the only acceptable number of countries outside the NPT”.

Ninth) *Lack of political will by nuclear-weapon States.* Above all, the main challenge of nuclear disarmament is the lack of genuine political will by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their legal obligations under article VI of the

NPT and implement their unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite all these challenges, the 71-year old global demand for the total elimination of nuclear weapons continues to be pursued with determination. In recent years, it has gained a new momentum represented in holding the first ever high-level meeting of UNGA on nuclear disarmament in 2013, followed by conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, in 2013 and 2014, and annual UNGA High Level Meeting on nuclear disarmament through 2014-2016.

This trend will be continued by “the UN high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament” in 2018, and, the 2017 conference proposed by the OEWG.

The main promising sign of current trend is that none of the initiatives is based on the failed old-fashioned step-by-step approach. For instance, one can refer to NAM proposal on negotiating a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention to prohibit the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and to provide for their irreversible and verifiable destruction. In our view, this is the only practical option to put nuclear disarmament process in the right direction.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to actively engage in all international efforts to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, including through its strong support for negotiating a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.