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**2015 Review Conference of the Parties  
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation  
of Nuclear Weapons**

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**Middle East Nuclear and Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone: progress  
towards the convening of a Conference attended by all States of the Middle East**

**Working Paper on behalf of the co-convening states of a Conference on the  
establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of  
mass destruction (Russia, UK and US)**

**Multilateral efforts**

1. The Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference “NPT/CONF.2010/50” tasked the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, namely the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, to convene a Conference on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in 2012, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region.

2. Co-convening states and the United Nations, alongside the Facilitator, have invested significant efforts in this process. Work started soon after the 2010 Review Conference, where co-convenors agreed a joint approach and, following extensive consultations over a number of months, the Republic of Finland was designated as the host government, and Ambassador Jaakko Laajava of Finland was appointed as the Facilitator in 2011 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution. Following the appointment of the Facilitator, the Government of Finland established under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs a team of experts to support the Facilitator's work and allocated funds to cover the activities of the Facilitator's office as well as the Conference itself.

3. Following his nomination, the Facilitator undertook outreach with States of the region, strongly supported by the co-convenors, in order to try and agree arrangements for a Conference attended by all States of the Middle East. Outreach also included discussions with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit. The Facilitator and co-convenors later made a number of joint trips to the region. As a result of this work, the Facilitator was able to circulate a number of papers in November 2012, and secure the willingness of one non-NPT state, to contribute to discussions on what freely-arrived arrangements for a Conference might mean in practice. At that stage, a meeting between States of the region to discuss arrangements was not yet possible.

4. Regrettably, despite these efforts, it was not possible to agree with States of the region the necessary agenda, modalities and outcomes for a Conference to be held in 2012, attended by all States of the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region. However, these efforts continued, with further consultations and travel to the region. In October 2013, after States of the region indicated a willingness to compromise in order to allow face to face talks, States met informally in Glion, Switzerland, supported by the Facilitator and co-convenors. These were the first direct security discussions involving the States of the region in almost twenty years, and hence the first moment since 2010 when direct regional discussions on a Conference took place. There have been four further informal meetings in Switzerland since that first meeting. Israel and Arab States have attended all five meetings.

5. Led by the Facilitator, States of the region have discussed arrangements for the Conference at these five meetings. All states participated in a respectful, positive and constructive manner. Papers on the agenda, modalities and outcomes for the Conference have all been tabled informally for discussion. Although States of the region continue to disagree on important elements of the agenda, there has been significant progress. This has included:

- A broad acceptance of the vast majority of the agenda, much of which is not contentious;
- Serious discussion of the modalities and outcomes documents;
- The willingness of parties for all Conference decisions to be taken by consensus;

6. States of the region have not met since June 2014, however, the efforts of the Facilitator and co-convenors have not ceased. The co-convenors have continued to work together and liaise closely with all of the States of the region. The Facilitator has continued to travel to regional cities, including Cairo, Tel Aviv and Tehran. He also proposed several times specific dates and alternative venues and meeting formats, all with a view to encouraging all states to participate in a further round of consultations to try and narrow differences on arrangements. It was unfortunately not possible to convene a further meeting.

7. Throughout this process, the co-convening states and the United Nations have invested considerable effort into convening a Conference. The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs have engaged actively to have the Conference convened as soon as possible, and given their full support to the Facilitator. Ministers and senior officials from the co-convening states have supported this process at the highest levels, in an effort to promote constructive engagement and support for the Facilitator's work. This has included numerous meetings with, discussions with and travel to States of the region. The co-convening states remain ready to support this process in order to convene a Conference as soon as possible.

## **Recommendations**

8. We recommend that:

- The Conference reiterates the importance of the Resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, and confirms its support for the full implementation of its aims and those of the 2010 Review Conference in relation to the Middle East.
- The Conference regrets that a Conference on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction did not take place in 2012; the Conference nonetheless welcomes the continuous efforts of the Facilitator, the States of the region and the co-convenors to try to agree arrangements for a Conference attended by all States of the Middle East to be convened, including through a series of informal consultations among regional parties, so that they may freely reach agreement on arrangements .
- The Conference urges all States of the region, supported by the Facilitator and the co-convenors, to undertake urgent consultations in order to allow the convening of a Conference attended by all States of the Middle East as soon as possible, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region.
- The Conference underlines its collective belief that convening a successful, inclusive Conference will be a practical first step towards the long-held, common goal of the establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction.

- In order to continue the substantive work in this area, the Conference should address the possibility of funding and consider the establishing of a special Trust Fund for all those interested to make voluntary contributions to cover the costs of holding the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction.
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