

Statement
Arab Republic of Egypt
First Committee of UNGA / 71st Session
(Thematic discussion on Regional Disarmament & Security)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, Egypt associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement as well as Tunisia on behalf of the Arab Group.

When addressing the universal objective of establishing nuclear weapon free zones across the world, the Middle East region has been always in the forefront. The longstanding issue of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction, in the Middle East has extensively occupied the international community, to the extent of virtually becoming the fourth pillar of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Despite the fact that the General Assembly passes an annual resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons since 1974, unfortunately, the issue remains unresolved after more than 40 years.

Two decades ago, as an integral element of the NPT extension package, the 1995 Conference adopted a resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Later on and specifically after 15 years of inaction, the 2010 Review Conference adopted, as part of its action plan, a set of constructive steps on the implementation of the 1995 Resolution that included, among others, mandating the Secretary-General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution (NPT depositary states) to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment

in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

In November 2012 and despite all the efforts and the full engagement and official readiness of the member States of the League of Arab States, the international community received the unexpected shocking news of postponing the 2012 Conference (that was meant to be held in Helsinki at that time). This was an illegitimate unilateral announcement and even without consulting the stakeholders. Furthermore, even after many rounds of consultations and meetings in Vienna, Glion, and Geneva the conference has not been held to date.

Mr. Chair,

In light of the terms of reference embodied in the 1995 Middle East Resolution, and the NPT 2010 mandate, the NAM working paper at the 2015 Review Conference provided a road-map in this regard including several practical progressive steps aiming at the realization of the Zone:

- 1. Reaffirming the 1995 Resolution on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, being the basis upon which the NPT was indefinitely extended without a vote, and that it remains valid until it is fully implemented.**
- 2. Calling upon Israel, the only State in the Middle East that remains non-party to the NPT (as well as all other WMD international treaties), to immediately sign and ratify the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State, and to place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.**

- 3. Calling upon the UN Secretary-General to convene a conference at the earliest time aimed at launching a technical and political process to conclude a legally binding Treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. This process shall be based on consensus, and all States of the Middle East region (i.e. Members of the League of Arab States, Israel, and Iran) will be invited to attend and participate in such Conference. The Secretary-General throughout the process, shall exert all organizational efforts and take all necessary measures with a view to ensuring the success of the conference.**

Mr. Chair,

The aforementioned constitutes our vision of the way forward for regional disarmament, and we shall spare no effort, hand in hand with the international community, to accomplish a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the 1995 Resolution, which remains valid until fully implemented.

I do thank you Mr. Chairman