

# ISRAEL

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Check Against Delivery

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Statement by

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Mr. Chairperson,

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the Chairpersonship, and assure you of my delegations' support, in the implementation of your duties.

Mr. Chairperson,

The importance of the UNDC, in the context of the disarmament machinery, was outlined in the First Special Session on Disarmament in 1978, where it was stipulated that the functions of the UNDC shall be to *inter alia* consider and make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament and consider elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament. It is clear that in order to fulfill its mandate, the UNDC needs to look at issues in a comprehensive manner and in context. The UNDC's recommendations should be deeply rooted in reality and strike the necessary balance between what is hoped for and what is feasible in light of prevailing regional and global circumstances.

In this respect, Israel is concerned with arms control and disarmament initiatives that seek to circumvent the complexities of the multilateral arena by catering to a limited group of like-minded countries which do not represent the full range of opinions and security interests. Such initiatives will not be able to achieve standing and authority, nor address issues effectively. Their relevance will remain contested, due to their deficient membership, and their achievements will be futile.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel supports a vision of a Middle East free from wars, conflicts, WMD and delivery means. This is a vision which all inhabitants of the region should aspire to, based on the hope for peace, mutual recognition, reconciliation and cessation of all acts of terrorism, aggression and hostility. At the same time, Israel believes that arms control and disarmament processes are inseparable from the context in which they exist. They need to be built on confidence building measures which are durable and sustainable and to be formulated in a way which addresses the relevant circumstances, challenges and threats that prevail in the region.

In recent years, the Middle East has been further destabilized and radicalized. The erosion of state sovereignty has never been so apparent. Territories which were previously under the control of central regimes are now contested or overrun by terrorist groups to which these territories have been ceded or abandoned. In fact, the Middle East, and Syria in particular, serve as a laboratory for terrorist activity.

Unfortunately, in today's Middle East, chemical weapons are still in use. The norm against the use of such weapons has been repeatedly violated by a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. This creates incentives for terrorist groups to acquire these capabilities and use them. There can be no greater challenge to this norm, than a State Party disregarding its obligations. In order for the CWC to remain a bulwark against the use and re-emergence of chemical weapons, it must demand that Syria fulfills its international obligations in their

entirety, in particular the prohibition against the use of chemical weapons, and submit a full and accurate disclosure of its chemical weapons capabilities.

Mr. Chairperson,

Iran remains the most significant threat to the security of the Middle East and beyond. Its recent ballistic missile tests indicate that the threat posed by Iran has not diminished, but rather, to the contrary. This is a signal of Iran's attitude towards the implementation of its international obligations.

Iran's clandestine activities in the nuclear domain in the past, as well as its continued acts of concealment and duplicity, in conjunction with its policy of aggression and hostility, raise the fundamental question as to whether regional players fully comprehend their duty to comply with international legal obligations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Against this troubling backdrop, any regional arms control process cannot be detached from reality. Israel has repeatedly emphasized that a more secure and peaceful Middle East requires all regional states to engage in a process of direct and sustained dialogue to address the broad range of regional security challenges in the region, which include all challenges and threats faced by the countries in the region individually and collectively.

Such a dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, can only emanate from within the region and address in an inclusive manner the threat perceptions of all regional parties in order to enhance and improve their security. Direct engagement, combined with trust and confidence-building, have always been an essential basis for the creation of a new and inclusive security paradigm in a region fraught with wars, conflicts, disintegration of national territories and human suffering.

The 1999 Report of this very forum, UNDC's Fifty-fourth session, sets out many important elements which contribute to the necessary foundation for the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones. The report clarifies that such a complex and sensitive security architecture should be the product of the specific circumstances of the region concerned, emanate exclusively from the states within the region at hand, and be pursued by all states of the region. Furthermore, such a zone needs to be based on arrangements freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel views with grave concern the dire effects associated with the proliferation and diversion of conventional weapons and considers this threat detrimental. Israel, individually and in collaboration with other stakeholders, actively works to counter this threat through the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, international norms and standards and national tools and mechanisms.

One of the most important instruments in addressing this challenge is the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, including the Marking and Tracing Instrument (ITI). The challenge of

diversion and illicit transfers of SALW requires our full and concerted attention and can only be addressed through our collaborative efforts, which the UNPoA is the basis and appropriate framework in which to do so.

Israel welcomes the successful meetings and deliberations held in New York in June 2015 on the ITI, and the BMS 6 held in June 2016. Israel is also looking forward to the 3<sup>rd</sup> review conference to be held in New York in 2018. Israel views the preparatory process as vital and important, and is looking forward to the exchange of views in this framework. The UNPoA however does not and cannot be an alternative to national mechanisms and legislation nor does it replace bilateral and regional cooperation, which should be enhanced.

Israel views the Arms Trade Treaty as another milestone in these efforts as it requires member states to carry out arms exports in a responsible and organized manner, thus, hopefully, reducing the illicit transfer of arms and its diversion. As a Signatory State, Israel supports the goals and purposes of this Treaty and acknowledges the important developments which have occurred in the international sphere through the creation of the ATT. Israel is looking forward to the third conference of State Parties which will be held in Geneva this coming September.

The 5<sup>th</sup> CCW review conference which was held last December yielded several significant results. Israel looks forward to further in-depth discussions on the issues of IEDs and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Unfortunately, due to financial reasons, the experts meetings on LAWS and on the various protocols will convene only in August. Israel believes that the experts and annual meetings should be held further apart to allow the high contracting parties ample time to look into the different pertaining issues. We therefore call on all high contracting parties to pay their dues on time and allow the secretariat to carry out their important tasks.

Mr. Chairperson,

As this is the final year in the three year cycle, we hope we can progress with the outcome documents in a way that will reflect both the deteriorating situation around the world and the specific approaches and needs of each state.

I thank you.