

# EGYPT



# مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt  
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نيويورك

Statement by H.E. Nabil Fahmy  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition  
to the High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament  
September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,

The existence of nuclear weapons continues to pose a threat to the very survival of humankind. Renewed international focus on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has led to a reinvigoration of international efforts to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. Such efforts are based on the understanding that the only guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

The issue of nuclear disarmament has been on the international agenda since nuclear weapons were first used. Over seven decades, several multilateral, regional and bilateral initiatives have sought to address nuclear disarmament. However none has achieved the ultimate goal. Sixty-seven years after the UN General Assembly sought to initiate a process to achieve "*the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable for mass destruction,*" much remains to be done to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapons-free world.

As a cross-regional grouping, the NAC has worked actively to promote the full and effective implementation of all nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments in order to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. This remains the NAC's primary goal.

Nuclear disarmament is not only an international legal obligation. It is a moral imperative. In spite of the growing international consensus regarding the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons, an estimated 20,000 nuclear devices still exist, and nuclear weapons remain at the heart of security doctrines of many States,

destabilizing international peace and security. The allocation of vast resources to retain and modernize nuclear weapons is at odds with international aspirations to economic and social development.

Mr. President,

Throughout the last 15 years, the NAC has advocated for the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures. While there has been some reason for optimism along the way, we have been disappointed by the slow pace of nuclear disarmament, both at regional and global levels, despite successive undertakings from the nuclear-weapon-states. Although undertakings are not lacking in this field, concrete progress is. The absence in the Middle East of a nuclear weapons free zone, including the failure to hold 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, as agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, continues to be a serious concern. All efforts must be exerted to hold the Conference without any further delay.

Mr. President,

The New Agenda Coalition's efforts are driven not only by the conviction that a world free of nuclear weapons would be a global public good of the highest order, as stated by the UN Secretary-General, but also by the belief that the only guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

Last month the NAC presented a working paper to the Open Ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, which I have the honour to bring to your attention. The NAC examined the elements that will be required to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. We identified gaps in the existing architecture and how they might be filled. The NAC put forward a number of critical elements to accelerate progress towards nuclear disarmament.

Drawing on several sources, including the First UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-I) and the Thirteen Practical Steps of 2000, our key conclusion was that a legally-binding and multilateral commitment to nuclear disarmament, backed by clearly defined timelines and benchmarks, is long overdue. This would serve to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the regime and guide all future nuclear disarmament efforts. The lack of progress on nuclear disarmament is simply unsustainable.

Thank you Mr. President