
Check against Delivery

Statement by

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Thank you, Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Ambassador GAMALELDIN, on assuming your duties as the president of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to assure you of my delegations' full cooperation in the conduct of your duties.

Israel values the Conference on Disarmament and its function as the single multilateral negotiation forum for non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. We look forward to receiving and discussing your draft Program of Work during the upcoming plenary sessions.

As the theme of "Nuclear Weapons Free Zones" is not agreed by consensus by this body and not part of the agenda we agreed upon, by consensus, last week, we view this discussion as part of agenda item 4, on Negative Security Assurances. It should be clear that there's no consensus in this room with regard to this discussion.

We thank UNIDIR for the presentation.

Mr. President,

We might hear today some countries expressing their opinion with regard to establishing a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East. This issue is first and foremost a regional issue and not a global one. Given that the Conference of Disarmament is a global framework, the CD is hardly the place to address this issue.

Furthermore, experience from other regions in the world, demonstrates that any framework of regional security can only be the outcome of mutual political desire of all parties to engage with each other.

Such a process in the Middle East can be initiated only after the establishment of full diplomatic relations between all countries of the region. What is the "Middle East" for that purpose, must also be agreed upon beforehand.

Such regional architecture must take into consideration the security concerns of every state and reflect arrangements freely arrived at by all states in the region, as stipulated in the 1999 UNDC report A/54/42 – The Disarmament Commission Report on Guidelines and Principles for the Establishment of Nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Without adherence to these well-established principles, there will be no useful basis for discourse with regard to the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Ill-motivated initiatives, such as the UN Conference on a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction, run contrary to the well-established guidelines and principles that have served as a basis for any other Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, and are unhelpful.

Israel will not take part in an artificial process that bypasses established practice.

Mr. President,

Israel values the importance of international arms control and disarmament mechanisms and their contribution to the global non-proliferation regime. When discussing regional instruments in the Middle East it is crucial to take into account the systematic lack of compliance to international disarmament norms and obligations in the region. One example is the NPT, which does not provide a remedy for the unique security challenges of the Middle East, let alone the repeated violations of the Treaty by some of its member states.



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It is worth recalling that to this day, four out of the five cases of serious violations of the NPT, since the Treaty entered into force, took place in the Middle East.

Unfortunately the Middle East is still struggling with a chronic lack of compliance with non-proliferation and arms control norms and mechanisms. Only this last weekend, the latest IIT report on Chemical Weapons served as clear reminder of such an in compliance in the region. It is crucial to address the continuous disdain, by some states in the region, to their obligations, which were agreed upon in the various arms control fora. This includes states that are knowingly and deliberately violating international treaties.

Regrettably, noncompliance with nonproliferation and disarmament treaties and instruments, in the Middle East, remains a grave challenge, which undermines regional security and stability. This issue needs to be addressed before discussing new commitments.

Independent processes outside the established disarmament architecture hold a risk of failing to give due regard to the security and stability context and might not engage all relevant participants.

As we begin a new year of work in the CD, Israel hopes that members of the CD will be able to bridge the differences towards a productive way forward. The Israeli delegation will continue to contribute constructively and assess with an open mind any suggestions that will be presented by Egypt and subsequent members of the P6.

Thank you