

Arab Republic of Egypt
Views on the scope of the comprehensive study
on the question of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in all its aspects

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 79/241, operative paragraph five, the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt would like to share its views on the scope of the comprehensive study on the question of nuclear weapon Free Zone in all its aspects, as follows:

- The adoption of the aforementioned resolution marks a step forward in our resolve to foster multilateralism in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
- The establishment of Nuclear-Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs) has played a pivotal role in freeing the southern hemisphere covered by the existing Free Zones treaties from nuclear weapons. Creating new NWFZs, where they do not exist, has become now more pressing, as Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and States not parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) continue to develop nuclear arsenals that threaten the existence of humanity. Thus, the process of establishing new zones in different parts of the world, in particular in the Middle East, should be pursued with utmost urgency and with the objective of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.
- Conducting a comprehensive study on the question of the NWFZs, as stipulated in the resolution, provides an opportunity to recall our conviction that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the strengthening of existing nuclear weapon free zones and the establishment of new ones shall enhance global and regional peace and security, foster the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament.
- The First comprehensive study on the question of NWFZs in all its aspects in 1975 was conducted after less than 10 years of the conclusion of the NPT in 1968 which affirmed, by virtue of its article VII, the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories. At the time, there were only two existing NWFZs (The NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean pursuant to the treaty of Tlatelolco in 1967 and the NWFZ in Antarctica pursuant to Antarctic treaty in 1959). There were also some proposals and prospects for the establishment of new zones where they do not exist, including the proposal triggered by the 1974 UNGA resolution to establish a Zone Free from nuclear weapons in the Middle East. In addition, article V of the Treaty on Outer Space in 1967 (OST) obliged State parties thereto not to place in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction.
- Over the course of the last five decades, progress in the realm of NWFZs took place, including, inter alia:
 - 1- The conclusion of treaties establishing new NWFZs: the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga on the South Pacific NWFZ, the 1995 Bangkok Treaty on the South East Asia NWFZ, the 1996 Pelindaba Treaty on the African NWFZ, and the 2006 Semipalatinsk Treaty on a NWFZ in Central Asia. Mongolia was also recognized internationally as a single-state nuclear weapon free zone in 2001.
 - 2- The conclusion of the first UNGA special session devoted to disarmament in 1978, which asserted that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements or arrangements freely arrived at and the full compliance with those agreements or arrangements, thus ensuring that the zones are genuinely free from nuclear weapons, and respect for such zones by nuclear-weapon States constitute an important disarmament measure. It also stated that the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East would greatly enhance international peace and security.

- 3- The adoption of the resolution on the Middle East by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, co-sponsored by the three NPT depositary states, which remains valid until its objective is fully realized. The Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference clearly recognizes the resolution on the Middle East as an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and as an integral component of the package of decisions based on which the Treaty was extended indefinitely, without a vote.
 - 4- The formulation of consensus guidelines in the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1999 on the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.
 - 5- The adoption of the United Nations General Assembly decision 73/546 in 2018, entrusting the Secretary-General with convening an annual UN conference to elaborate a legally binding treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, while taking the 1995 resolution as its terms of reference and on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region. All States of the Middle East, the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in the light of their responsibility for the implementation of the 1995 resolution, the other two NWS and the relevant international organizations are invited to participate in the conference. Five sessions of the UN conferences were held pursuant to the decision, all of which adopted final reports containing important elements with regards to the scope and obligations of the envisaged treaty.
 - 6- The organisation of three international conferences of States parties and signatories of treaties establishing nuclear weapons free zones and Mongolia in the years 2005, 2010 and 2015, which adopted 3 respective declarations outlining fundamental principles affirming the role of these zones in delegitimizing nuclear weapons, strengthening nuclear proliferation, building cooperative security and paving the way for a nuclear-weapons-free world. The UN General Assembly has agreed on convening the fourth conference to be held at a later date.
 - 7- The conclusion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017 and its entry into force in 2021.
- Hence, the agreement to conduct a new study on the question of nuclear weapon free zones in all its aspects gains specific importance and provides a valuable opportunity that must be seized to build on the developments and meetings mentioned above, with a view to solidifying the agreed literature and principles outlined therein and strengthening the legal and political architecture of the NWFZs at the global and regional levels, within the context of our concerted efforts to reinforcing the non-proliferation regime and achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.
 - The scope of the envisaged study should focus on:
 - 1- The motivations and objectives in the establishment of existing NWFZ, taking into considerations their distinct characteristics in origins, structure and institutional mechanism, as well as ways to strengthen these zones and their associated assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and to enhance cooperation and dialogue among them with the aim of promoting the implementation of its provisions.
 - 2- Prospects and proposals for the establishment of new NWFZs, along with a detailed review of all initiatives aimed at establishing new zones, and all efforts undertaken in this regard, which are premised on the agreed principles and guidelines developed over the past decades—particularly in connection with efforts to establish a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, given the importance of creating such a zone in maintaining regional and global peace, and in preserving the credibility and sustainability

of the non-proliferation regime, taking into account the significance of the 1995 Resolution, which remains valid until its objective is achieved.

In this regard, the constructive atmosphere within which the ongoing deliberations take place at the UN Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and the ensuing consensual outcomes, could represent a contribution and input that can be considered in conducting the envisaged comprehensive study. In that connection, the UN Conference agreed in its fifth session in November 2024 to provide input to the comprehensive study on the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, for example by officially transmitting outcomes of the Conference and those of the working committee to the group of experts undertaking the comprehensive study.

- 3- The impact of NWFZs on regional and global peace, stability and cooperation including: (1) tension and nuclear risk reduction, (2) renouncing nuclear weapons as a political and military instrument in the region concerned, (3) Strengthening nuclear non-proliferation efforts at the regional level, drawing from the lessons learnt in applying certain verification mechanisms in the context of establishing the existing zone without prejudice to the distinct character of every zone, and (4) post treaty cooperation mechanisms in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in line with the inalienable right to these uses as enshrined in the NPT.