

**Pursuant to resolution 77/38 entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 7 December 2022, Kazakhstan presents its views to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on this Resolution.**

The overall disarmament process and the maintenance of global peace, security and stability are closely interrelated and interdependent, and therefore must be reinforced with efforts at the regional level.

We recognize the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones as key elements to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. It is essential to strengthen and consolidate nuclear-weapon-free zones, by facilitating enhanced cooperation and consultation between existing zones, and encouraging nuclear-weapon States to adhere to the relevant protocols to the already international agreed treaties.

Kazakhstan believes that a deliberate and gradual movement towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones contributes to the building of trust among neighbours at the regional level and lays the foundations for peace and cooperation, including in the Middle East.

Kazakhstan is one of the founding members of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which was signed in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, in 2006 and entered into force in 2009. An important component of the Treaty is the Protocol on negative security assurances. To date, four of the five nuclear-weapon States (the exception being the United States of America) have ratified the Protocol.

Kazakhstan believes that the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones could expand the geography of the nuclear-free world so that our entire planet becomes one large nuclear-weapon-free zone in the future. In this context, Kazakhstan had put forward an initiative to strengthen cooperation among all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and, and to that end, held a meeting of representatives of the Member States of such zones in Nur-Sultan (presently Astana), Kazakhstan, in August 2019.

That meeting, and other exchanges in the future, proves that the experience of other regions in overcoming their unique challenges and establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, are valuable and provide useful lessons with regard to the context of the Middle East.

Kazakhstan is concerned that instability persists in various regions of the world. Regional disarmament and security are complicated, and the failure to achieve them can derail the progress made thus far. Like others, we believe that the situation in the Middle East, as well as in other parts of the world, remain tense and unpredictable.

We are firmly convinced that political and diplomatic solutions are the only effective tools for addressing intricate and complex interlocking international threats.

The situation in the Middle East requires our immediate attention. One of the vital steps to ensure peace, stability and trust is to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Therefore, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is one of the most effective means to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We must, hence, strive for significant diplomatic achievements in order to strengthen and consolidate the nuclear weapon non-proliferation regime if we want to ensure regional and international security.

Kazakhstan reiterates its full commitment to advancing regional disarmament as an essential and integral part of the global security architecture.