

2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Background paper prepared by the United Nations Secretariat

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I. Introduction

1. At its third session (10-21 May 1999), the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons invited the Secretary-General to prepare for the Conference a background paper on the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, reflecting developments since 1995 with a view to realizing fully the objectives of the resolution.

2. The Preparatory Committee stated that the following general approach should apply to the proposed papers (similar to the approach applied for the preparation of background documentation for the 1995 Review and Extension Conference): all papers must give balanced, objective and factual descriptions of the relevant developments, be as short as possible and be easily readable. They must refrain from presenting value judgements. Rather than presenting collections of statements, they should reflect agreements reached, actual unilateral and multilateral measures taken, understandings adopted, formal proposals for agreements made and important political developments directly related to any of the foregoing. The papers should focus on the period since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and on the implementation of the outcome of that conference, including the decisions on "Strengthening the Review process for the Treaty" and on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" and the "Resolution on the Middle East".

3. The present paper is submitted in response to that request. In this connection, attention is also drawn to the background papers on the implementation of articles I and II (NPT/CONF.2000/3) and to the background paper prepared by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on its activities relevant to article III (NPT/CONF.2000/9).

II. Resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference

4. On 11 May 1995, the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons adopted the "Resolution on the Middle East", sponsored by the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, as depositaries of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The text of the resolution is contained in the annex to the present paper.

III. Review of the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East

A. Efforts contributing to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Middle East peace process

5. By paragraph 1 of the resolution on the Middle East, the Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty "endorses the aims and objectives of the Middle East peace process and recognizes that efforts in this regard, as well as other efforts, contribute to *inter alia*, a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction". Developments towards establishing lasting regional peace, which became known as the Middle East peace process, received a new impetus with the conference of representatives of Israel, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon convened by the United States and the then Soviet Union held in October 1991 in Madrid. One of the results of the conference was the start of the multilateral track of the peace process, which is composed of the Steering Committee and five regional working groups on economic development (REDWG), on the environment, on water, on refugees, and on arms control and regional security (ACRS), respectively. The international community, including the United Nations and its Special Representative/Coordinator, actively supported the parties in their talks, in particular through the multilateral track of the peace process.

6. In September 1993, Israel and PLO signed in Washington the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, known as the Oslo Accords. In September 1995, Israel and the PLO signed an agreement on Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank, providing for the withdrawal of Israeli troops and the handover of civil authority in the West Bank to an elected Palestinian Council. After several years of impasse, in October 1998, President Clinton of the United States convened meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. Extended negotiations produced an interim accord (Wye River Memorandum), calling for further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, the release of Palestinian prisoners, and for measures to curb violence against Israel.

7. In May 1999, Israeli Prime Minister Barak and United States President Clinton in a joint statement pledged to make the Middle East peace process a “top priority”. On 5 September 1999, Prime Minister Barak and President Arafat signed the Memorandum on Implementation Timeline of Outstanding Commitments of Agreements Signed and the Resumption of Permanent Status Negotiations (Sharm el-Sheikh memorandum). In the memorandum, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, *inter alia*, committed themselves to full and mutual implementation of the Wye River Memorandum and all other agreements concluded between them since.

8. At a summit meeting held in Oslo in November 1999, United States President Clinton, Prime Minister Barak of Israel and President Arafat of the Palestinian Authority reaffirmed their commitment to the peace process. The parties promised to meet regularly during the negotiations, and teams of representatives from both sides were also to meet for intense negotiations with the aim of concluding a framework agreement by mid-February 2000 and a final agreement by September 2000.

9. Negotiations between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic on a comprehensive peace accord were resumed in Washington in December 1999. Israeli Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Sharaa of the Syrian Arab Republic continued the talks in January 2000. The negotiations were suspended in January 2000.

10. A revival of the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process took place with a meeting held in

Moscow on 1 February 2000.¹ The Foreign Ministers of the Multilateral Steering Group met in Moscow to reinvigorate the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process as an integral component of the Madrid framework. The Russian Federation and the United States, as co-sponsors of the peace process, co-chaired the meeting, which was the first formal Multilateral Steering Group meeting held since 1995.² The purpose of the meeting was to mark the formal resumption of the work of the multilateral track of the peace process after years of recess, although some activities were held by experts meeting in various specific projects, seminars and discussions, and some significant work still went on. The next Multilateral Steering Group meeting will be hosted by the European Union in July 2000. In their joint declaration, the Steering Group ministers confirmed their strong commitment to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to support progress in the bilateral tracks by enhancing regional cooperation through dialogue and exchanges among the parties in the Multilateral Working Groups, (see also para. 21 below).

B. Acceptance of full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on all nuclear activities

11. As stipulated in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the resolution on the Middle East and in the decision on “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament”, States not party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should be urged to enter into comprehensive Safeguards Agreements with IAEA. The United Nations General Assembly, in numerous resolutions on the subject of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East³ as well as on the subject of the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East,⁴ has called upon all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so to place all their nuclear activities under full-scope IAEA safeguards. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council, after a meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 23 September 1999, in a statement,⁵ urged all parties to the Treaty concerned to bring into force the comprehensive Safeguards Agreements required under the Treaty, as

well as additional protocols based on the IAEA Model Additional Protocols, and called upon other States which are prepared to accept measures provided for in the Model Additional Protocol to conclude such protocols with IAEA.

12. Furthermore, the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency in a series of resolutions on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East,⁶ has reaffirmed the urgent need for all States in the Middle East forthwith to accept the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all their nuclear activities as an important confidence-building measure among all States in the region and as a step in enhancing peace and security in the context of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The General Conference has also called upon all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking the practical and appropriate steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a mutually and effectively verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region and invited the countries concerned to adhere to international non-proliferation regimes, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as a means of complementing participation in a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and of strengthening peace and security in the region. Details of the steps taken towards the implementation of the General Conference resolutions are given in the IAEA background paper on the Agency's activities relevant to article III of the Treaty (NPT/CONF.2000/9). The details highlight the particular steps taken by the Director General of the Agency to fulfil the mandate conferred upon him by the resolutions.

13. An item on "Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat" has been on the agenda of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency for a number of years. The item was re-inscribed in the agenda of the forty-second session of the General Conference in 1998, at the request of a number of member States.⁷ In 1999, following a request by the Arab States members of the Agency, the General Conference decided to include the item in the agenda of its forty-third session.⁸

C. Realization of universal adherence to the Treaty

14. Under paragraph 4 of the resolution on the Middle East and the decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" all States not yet party to the Treaty are called upon to "accede to the Treaty at the earliest date, particularly those States that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. Every effort should be made by all States parties to achieve this objective."

15. Since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, nine more States have become parties. With the accession of Djibouti, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, all States of the region of the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, are States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The overall membership in the Non-Proliferation Treaty has increased to 187 from 178 at the time of the 1995 Conference.

16. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council, after meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 23 September 1999, in a statement,⁹ reiterated the need for universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and called upon all States that had not yet done so to accede to the Treaty at an early date.

D. Efforts contributing to a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological — and their delivery systems

17. The idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East dates back to the 1970s and was first raised by Iran and by Egypt. Subsequently, the Syrian Arab Republic as well as other States of the region supported the project for such a zone. Since then, the General Assembly has annually adopted resolutions on the subject.¹⁰ In 1990, Egypt broadened the concept by proposing the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.¹¹ Further elaborating on that initiative, Egypt called upon the major arms-producing States to endorse the declaration of the Middle East as a region free of weapons of mass destruction.¹² The proposal was reaffirmed at the 1995 Review and Extension

Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty¹³ and in annual resolutions of the General Assembly since then.¹⁴

18. The proposal for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has met with wide acceptance in the United Nations and has been adopted by consensus in the General Assembly since 1980. In 1999, by its resolution 54/51 of 1 December, the General Assembly, as in previous years, urged all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East in accordance with the relevant resolutions, and, as a means of promoting that objective, invited the countries concerned to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Further, pending the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the Assembly invited those countries not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or permit the stationing on their territories, or territories under their control, of nuclear weapons or nuclear-explosive devices. The General Assembly furthermore invited the nuclear-weapon States and all other States to render their assistance in the establishment of the zone and, at the same time, to refrain from any action that ran counter to both the letter and the spirit of the initiative. However, discussions within and outside the United Nations have revealed differences of view regarding how best to advance the concept of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone and on preferred approaches towards that goal.

19. The Arab States underlined that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone would contribute substantially to a comprehensive peace settlement in the region, by helping to create the climate for such a settlement. They stressed the importance of the relationship between confidence-building measures, in particular the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and the enhancement of security in the region. They also reiterated their readiness to take practical steps towards the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free from all weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological — and to refrain from taking any measures precluding the achievement of that objective in accordance with paragraph 5 of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East as well as paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). The Arab

States stressed that Israel was the only State in the Middle East that had not yet become party to the Treaty and had not declared its intention to do so, and called upon Israel to accede to the Treaty without further delay and not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons, and to renounce possession of nuclear weapons, and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.¹⁵ Israel has stated that it firmly believes in the eventual establishment of a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It has argued that a nuclear-weapon-free region would eventually serve as a complement to overall peace and security in the region and should be part of a zone eliminating chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as ballistic missiles. For Israel, the zone must be established by direct negotiations between States after they have recognized each other and comprehensive peaceful relations between them have been established. The zone must be mutually verifiable, achieving on a regional basis the non-proliferation goal of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The goal should be approached step-by-step, starting with confidence-building measures and eventually leading to a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.¹⁶ Israel maintains that negotiations on these, as on all issues concerning the security of the region, could only realistically be expected to take place freely and directly within the framework of the peace process. A regional nuclear-weapon-free zone should emanate from within the region and be supported by all the States of the region, and could not be imposed on them.

20. The goal of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and all missiles for their delivery and the objective of a global ban on chemical weapons was also recalled by the Security Council in its resolution 687 (1991) and reiterated in its recent resolution 1284 (1999) of 17 December 1999. (For detailed information, see NPT/CONF.2000/3 and NPT/CONF.2000/9.)

21. In the 1990s, the measures of nuclear disarmament agreed upon by extra-regional Powers, and the direct negotiations between Arab States and Israel, in particular, had a bearing on the prospects for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Consideration of the issue had been facilitated by the establishment of the Middle East Multilateral Group on Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) by the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East.

Discussions were being held in that framework among and between regional and extra-regional States with a view to determining how best to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. However, the differences in concept and approach described above still exist. Since April 1993, the United Nations has taken an active part in the work of ACRS. The Group has, however, not met since December 1994. The Secretary-General, pursuant to various General Assembly resolutions, has submitted several reports to the Assembly on the question of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.¹⁷ In his most recent report,¹⁸ he noted with regret that no further positive developments had occurred in the consideration of the issue and that the impasse in the work of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security had continued. The Secretary-General maintained the view that, under appropriate circumstances, the Working Group could still play a useful role as a forum for discussing a broad range of arms control, disarmament and confidence-building measures, including the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region, and strongly urged all concerned parties to review the situation in order to resume discussions and establish a common position as expeditiously as possible. At the Multilateral Steering Group meeting held in Moscow on 1 February 2000 (see para. 10 above), the participating Foreign Ministers emphasized the importance of reaching an agreed comprehensive agenda for ACRS. In that regard, they called upon the parties in the region to intensify their efforts to reach an agreement on this and to resume their work, with the help of the co-sponsors, with the goal of getting formal ACRS activities under way within a few months.¹⁹

22. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, at its session in 1999, adopted a document entitled "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned".²⁰ In the paper, the Commission gave a general overview of the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones and defined objectives and purposes as well as principles and guidelines. In the forward-looking part on initiatives to establish new zones, it stated:

"The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions for which consensus resolutions of the General Assembly exist, such as the Middle East and Central Asia, as well as the

development of zones free from all weapons of mass destruction, should be encouraged."²¹

The Disarmament Commission furthermore stated that the international community should continue to promote the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world in an effort towards achieving the ultimate goal of freeing the entire world from all nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction and, more broadly speaking, of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, so that future generations might live in a more stable and peaceful atmosphere.

23. Support for the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone has also been expressed by other forums both inside and outside the United Nations framework. The General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in successive resolutions, most recently in resolution GC(43)/RES/23 (1999), has called upon all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking the practical and appropriate steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a mutually and effectively verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. The countries concerned have also been invited to adhere to international non-proliferation regimes, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as a means of complementing participation in a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and of strengthening peace and security in the region. In addition, the Director General of the Agency has undertaken consultations with the countries in the Middle East,²² on the verification of compliance with a future Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty. (For more information, see the background paper prepared by IAEA on its activities relevant to article III of the Treaty (NPT/CONF.2000/9).)

24. At its seventieth session (March 1999), the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council called upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.²³ The League of Arab States in May 1999, in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, stressed the importance that the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States that sponsored the Middle East resolution, should be urged to make the greatest efforts for the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of

mass destruction, and primarily nuclear weapons, in the region of the Middle East.²⁴

25. During the period under review, the project for the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East received support from a wide range of States. The European Union expressed the view that the question of the scope of a nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty and its linkages with the proposed zone free of weapons of mass destruction, together with the available options for verification of such a treaty, would be taken up during the negotiations among the States of the region concerned. Furthermore, the European Union called upon those States to begin discussions without delay with a view to opening those negotiations, and stated that such discussions and the start of negotiations would in themselves be factors in the dialogue that could significantly improve security and stability in the region.²⁵

26. States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty also referred to the subject during the preparatory process for the 2000 Review Conference. The members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, proposed that the Preparatory Committee should recommend ways and means to get all parties directly concerned to engage seriously in undertaking practical and urgent steps required for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, a zone which should be freely arrived at among regional States.²⁶ They also proposed that the States parties should stress the urgent need for Israel to accede to the Treaty without further delay and to place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards, in order to enhance the universality of the Treaty and to avert the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.²⁷ Egypt proposed a number of practical steps for making progress towards the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. They include the early conclusion of the text of a treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone as a step towards the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East; and requesting, for the aforementioned purpose, the assistance of international organizations such as the United Nations and IAEA. According to Egypt, such assistance could include, *inter alia*, the dispatching of a special envoy to the Middle East with the task of assisting the States of the region in their endeavours to reach the objective of

a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East.²⁸ The European Union and also a number of associated Central and Eastern European countries spoke in favour of the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones which, in their view and on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States concerned, had made a valuable contribution to global and regional peace and security. They also supported calls for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, provided that all States in the region are involved.²⁹ The United States supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, and particularly in the Middle East, as well as the objective of making the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, again based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Complementing such a goal, the United States encouraged universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It also strongly supported efforts by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the IAEA Action Team to ensure that Iraq is complying with the relevant Security Council resolutions and favoured the earliest possible resumption of disarmament and monitoring activities in Iraq. The United States also reiterated that a strong and effective Non-Proliferation Treaty required all parties to the Treaty to be in compliance with their obligations under the Treaty, including conclusion of the requisite full-scope Safeguards Agreements with IAEA.³⁰

Notes

¹ Moscow Steering Group Ministerial Joint Declaration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Information and Press Department Reports, 1 February 2000.

² The meeting was attended by representatives of: Canada, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and the United States. The European Union was represented by the Commissioner for International Relations, the Coordinator for Foreign Policy, and the Foreign Minister of Portugal. Norway, Switzerland, the United Nations and China attended the meeting as guests of the co-sponsors. Representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon did not attend the meeting.

- ³ For details see resolutions 50/66, 51/41, 52/34, 53/74 and 54/51.
- ⁴ For details see resolutions 50/73, 51/48, 52/41, 53/80 and 54/57.
- ⁵ S/1999/996.
- ⁶ For details see IAEA resolutions GC(39) RES/24, GC(40) RES/22, GC(41)RES/25, GC(42) RES/21) and GC(43) RES/23.
- ⁷ See IAEA decision GC(42)/DEC/11.
- ⁸ See IAEA document GC(43)/8 and decision GC(43)/DEC/13.
- ⁹ S/1999/996.
- ¹⁰ In the period under review, the following resolutions on the subject were adopted without a vote: 50/66, 51/41, 52/34, 53/74 and 54/51.
- ¹¹ The proposal was first submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in April 1990 (see CD/989).
- ¹² A/46/329-S/22855, annex.
- ¹³ See, for example, NPT/CONF.1995/SR.8, SR.9, SR.11; SR.13; PV.17; PV.18; and PV.19.
- ¹⁴ Egypt annually initiated the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.
- ¹⁵ NPT/CONF.2000/PC.III/7, NPT/CONF.2000/PC.III/8 and NPT/CONF.2000/PC.III/12.
- ¹⁶ A/C.1/53/PV. 26.
- ¹⁷ See A/50/325, A/51/286 and Add.1, A/52/271, A/53/379 and A/54/190 and Add.1.
- ¹⁸ A/54/190 and Add.1.
- ¹⁹ Moscow Steering Group Ministerial Joint Declaration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Information and Press Department Reports, 1 February 2000.
- ²⁰ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 42*, A/54/42, annex I.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, para. 40.
- ²² GC(43)/17 and annex.
- ²³ A/53/869-S/1999/308.
- ²⁴ NPT/CONF.2000/PC.III/7.
- ²⁵ See A/52/271.
- ²⁶ NPT/CONF.2000/PC.I/10.
- ²⁷ NPT/CONF.2000/PC.III/1.
- ²⁸ NPT/CONF.2000/PC.II/22.
- ²⁹ Statement by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union on Middle East nuclear-weapon-free-zone resolutions made at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Geneva, 4 May 1998.
- ³⁰ Statement by the United States made at the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 14 May 1999.

Annex

Resolution on the Middle East

The Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,

Reaffirming the purpose and provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,

Recognizing that, pursuant to article VII of the Treaty, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones contributes to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime,

Recalling that the Security Council, in its statement of 31 January 1992,^a affirmed that the proliferation of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction constituted a threat to international peace and security,

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions adopted by consensus supporting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the latest of which is resolution 49/71 of 15 December 1994,

Recalling further the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency concerning the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, the latest of which is GC(XXXVIII)/RES/21 of 23 September 1994, and noting the danger of nuclear proliferation, especially in areas of tension,

Bearing in mind Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and in particular paragraph 14 thereof,

Noting Security Council resolution 984 (1995) and paragraph 8 of the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted by the Conference on 11 May 1995,

Bearing in mind the other decisions adopted by the Conference on 11 May 1995,

1. *Endorses* the aims and objectives of the Middle East peace process and recognizes that efforts in this regard, as well as other efforts, contribute to, *inter alia*, a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction;

2. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in its report (NPT/CONF.1995/MC.III/1), Main Committee III of

the Conference recommended that the Conference “call on those remaining States not parties to the Treaty to accede to it, thereby accepting an international legally binding commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices and to accept International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on all their nuclear activities”;

3. *Notes with concern* the continued existence in the Middle East of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, and reaffirms in this connection the recommendation contained in section VI, paragraph 3, of the report of Main Committee III urging those non-parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities to accept full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards;

4. *Reaffirms* the importance of the early realization of universal adherence to the Treaty, and calls upon all States of the Middle East that have not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place their nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards;

5. *Calls upon* all States in the Middle East to take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards, *inter alia*, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective;

6. *Calls upon* all States party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

^a S/23500.