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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	2
II. Observations	2
III. Replies received from Governments	4
Albania	4
China	5
Colombia	6
Cuba	6
Israel	7
Mexico	8
Syrian Arab Republic	9
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	11
IV. Reply received from the European Union	12

* [A/76/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 10 of its resolution [75/33](#) on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution [46/30](#). Taking into account the evolving situation in the region, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of those States on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to the report of the Secretary-General of 10 October 1990 ([A/45/435](#)) or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, at its seventy-sixth session, a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. On 19 February 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs sent a note verbale to all Member States drawing their attention to paragraphs 10 and 11 of resolution [75/33](#) and seeking their views on the matter, with the deadline of 31 May 2021 for the submission of reports. Any views received after that deadline will be posted on the website of the Office (www.un.org/disarmament) in the language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

3. Replies were received from the Governments of Albania, China, Colombia, Cuba, Israel, Mexico, the Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and are reproduced in section III of the present report. A reply received from the European Union is reproduced in section IV, in accordance with the modalities set out in General Assembly resolution [65/276](#).

II. Observations

4. At the sixty-fourth regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), held in September 2020, members of the Group of Arab States reiterated a request to include an agenda item entitled “Israeli nuclear capabilities”. However, for the fifth consecutive year, the Group of Arab States opted not to introduce a resolution under that item. The Group stated that all Arab States had acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and shown their continuing readiness to take practical steps towards the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The Group urged Israel to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to place all its nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system.¹ Israel stated that the continued inclusion of the agenda item served no purpose other than politicizing the discussions at the General Conference. It also stated that that approach would neither assist in the building of confidence and trust, paramount to any meaningful direct regional consultations, nor hasten the outcome of such a process.²

5. At the meetings of the First Committee during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, held in October and November 2020, many Member States welcomed the successful outcome of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons

¹ See explanatory memorandum submitted by the States members of the League of Arab States on Israeli nuclear capabilities, available at www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gc/gc64-1-add1.pdf.

² See communication received from the Resident Representative of Israel regarding the request to include in the agenda of the Conference an item entitled “Israeli nuclear capabilities” available at www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gc/gc64-14.pdf.

of Mass Destruction, held in November 2019, and stressed the valuable benefits that such a zone could bring to regional and global peace and security. The Group of Arab States urged all invited parties to the Conference to join the process. Israel reiterated its objection to the Conference and stated that any regional security framework could only be the outcome of a mutual political desire of all regional parties to engage with each other, taking into consideration the security concerns of each and every State and reflecting arrangements freely arrived at by all concerned States.

6. The second session of the Conference was scheduled to take place from 16 to 20 November 2020 in New York. However, in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, participating States decided to postpone the second session of the Conference to a later date in 2021 (see [A/CONF.236/DEC.5](#)). The second session is scheduled to take place from 29 November to 3 December 2021 in New York.

7. To support the participating States in the implementation of the outcome of the first session of the Conference and to prepare for the second session, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in close consultations with the President and participating States of the Conference, organized two virtual informal workshops on experience and lessons learned with regard to existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, in July 2020 and February 2021 respectively. The workshops offered insights on practical experience and lessons learned from the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world. Participants also exchanged views on how the experience and lessons could contribute to the process of establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Positive feedback was received from the participants, in particular on the informal setting for candid exchanges of views with the participation of academic institutions and experts and on the utility of information and various views on key substantive issues involved in the establishment of the Middle East zone.

8. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research continued to examine the historical context of, perspectives on and prospects for a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction through the convening of inclusive dialogues and the publication of policy papers on topics such as nuclear verification in a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction³ and the lessons learned from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.⁴ In addition, the project launched two online tools, namely, the Middle East weapons-of-mass-destruction-free-zone documents depository,⁵ a resource hub that collects and organizes the main documents related to the evolution of the zone, and the Middle East weapons-of-mass-destruction-free-zone timeline,⁶ an interactive platform that allows users to explore the key milestones in the zone process through documents, photos and videos. The timeline is available in Arabic, English, Hebrew and Persian.

9. The eventual achievement of a Middle East peace settlement would contribute to the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In that connection, all parties concerned, inside and outside the region, should seek to create such conditions. The United Nations remains ready to provide any assistance in that regard. In that context, the continued lack of prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the

³ John Carlson, "Nuclear verification in a Middle East WMD-Free Zone: Lessons from Past Verification Cases and Other Precedents", Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone Series (Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2021).

⁴ Chen Zak and Farzan Sabat, eds., "From the Iran nuclear deal to a Middle East Zone? Lessons from the JCPOA for an ME WMDFZ", Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone Series (Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2021).

⁵ <https://unidir.org/wmdfz-documents-item>.

⁶ <https://unidir.org/timeline>.

growing impediments to the realization of the two-State solution are deeply concerning. The recent escalation of violence and its devastating impact on the civilian population is a gruesome reminder of the fragility of the situation and the imperative of revitalizing the peace process. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.

10. Since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/75/182 (Part I)), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations have continued their efforts towards the full implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. The use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances is intolerable, and impunity for their use is equally unacceptable. Therefore, it is imperative to hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons.

III. Replies received from Governments

Albania

[Original: English]
[31 May 2021]

The Republic of Albania is not part of the region of the Middle East and is not a directly concerned party mentioned and addressed by the resolution and called upon to consider 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.

Albania is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Albania does not produce, store or transport nuclear, biological or chemical weapons or similar devices. Albania has approved the national strategy to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Albania is a proactive contributor to regional security concerning weapons of mass destruction.

Although Albania is not a direct part of the resolution, within the function of the resolution, it can state as follows:

The Republic of Albania is fully committed to a safe and secure region in the Middle East.

The Republic of Albania has in place an effective export control system for military items and dual-use goods and technologies. The system is composed of an extensive legislative framework and institutions in charge of implementation.

The goods that can be used in their entirety or in part for development, production, modification, operation, assembling, handling, testing, repair, disposing, application, maintenance, storage, detection or dissemination of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, cannot be transferred (exported or transited) and are part of export controls with a well-established licencing system.

Although Albania is not a producer or exporter of nuclear material or systems, as a legal obligation, the Export Control Authority has to implement all the

international restrictions or commitments Albania is part of or is aligned with, such as United Nations resolutions, European Union common positions, etc.

China

[Original: Chinese/English]

[31 May 2021]

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/33](#), the Government of China would like to share its views on the measures facilitating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as follows:

A nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, once established, will help to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, ease tension in the Middle East and enhance peace and security in the region and the world. While promoting reconciliation and cooperation among the Middle East countries and facilitating the Middle East peace process, the international community should attach great importance to and support efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

All countries should earnestly implement relevant General Assembly resolutions, the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and relevant provisions of the Final Documents of the Review Conferences in 2000 and in 2010 respectively.

States concerned in the Middle East should sign and ratify comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Israel should accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State as soon as possible and fulfil its obligations in an earnest manner, and the international community should continue to encourage concerned States to sign and ratify the additional protocols to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements.

China firmly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, fully understands the concerns and needs of the Arabian countries, voted for the decision of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, attended the first conference as an observer in November 2019 and promoted the adoption of a political declaration through consensus, thus initiating the relevant international discussions.

In March 2021, State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Wang Yi, proposed a five-point initiative on achieving security and stability in the Middle East. As an important pillar of the initiative, China calls on the international community to support regional countries in their efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

China calls upon all parties concerned to fully demonstrate their political will and adopt flexible and practical measures to break the deadlock during the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

China calls upon all parties concerned to enhance diplomatic coordination, adopt practical measures and strive to reach an early consensus on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. China is ready to actively participate in the relevant process and provide all necessary support to contribute to the early establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

It is our hope that the above views will be reflected in the relevant report of the Secretary-General.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]

[31 May 2021]

The Republic of Colombia has voluntarily submitted this report pursuant to paragraphs 10 and 11 of General Assembly resolution 75/33 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, which state the following:

10. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 46/30 and taking into account the evolving situation in the region, and to seek from those States their views on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to the report of the Secretary-General of 10 October 1990 or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East;

11. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

Colombia reiterates its commitment in this regard to general, complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament, and has therefore supported multilateral initiatives aimed at the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones as measures to contribute to peace, stability and global security.

Accordingly, Colombia, as a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) – which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone – wishes to highlight the enormous political, legal and institutional contribution of this regional agreement to the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In addition, Colombia supports the provisions of resolution GC(64)/RES/15 adopted on 24 September 2020 at the tenth plenary meeting of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at its sixty-fourth regular session, relating to the need for the States of the Middle East to immediately accept the application of full-scope IAEA safeguards to all their nuclear activities as an important confidence-building measure among all States in the region and as a step towards enhancing peace and security in the context of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

[20 May 2021]

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important contribution to international efforts for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We commend the efforts made, in accordance with the provisions of article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to establish such zones in all regions of the world.

Cuba is part of the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), which has been a political, legal and institutional benchmark for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other regions of the world. Those zones have been established through the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok), the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), the

Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia (Treaty of Semipalatinsk) and the declaration by Mongolia regarding its nuclear-weapon-free status.

The Latin American and Caribbean region has made a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament and to the maintenance of international peace and security, having been the first to be proclaimed a “zone of peace”, at the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are of great importance because they promote peace and stability at the regional and international levels by prohibiting the possession, acquisition, development, testing, manufacture, production, stockpiling, deployment and use of nuclear weapons. They represent a concrete legal achievement of the utmost importance in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. They must be respected by all States, without reservations or other limitations. Given their importance, the establishment of such regimes in the remaining regions must be actively promoted.

We reiterate the importance of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the need for Israel immediately to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to place its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

It is regrettable that, despite the calls from the international community and in the many resolutions and decisions adopted at the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and by the United Nations General Assembly and IAEA, the establishment of such a zone has not been achieved.

One aspect that undermines confidence in the Non-Proliferation Treaty is the failure to implement commitments made during the Review Conferences. The resolution on the Middle East, adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, and the 2010 plan of action are two elements that will need to be given due attention in the run-up to the tenth Review Conference if the credibility of this instrument is to be restored. It is crucial to reach a consensus that is beneficial for the parties and that restores confidence in the Treaty and in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime in general.

We firmly believe that the establishment of such a zone would contribute significantly to the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament and would also constitute a major step forward in the peace process in the Middle East region.

Israel

[Original: English]

[27 May 2021]

The State of Israel reiterates its explanation of vote regarding resolution [75/33](#) entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 2020, made in the First Committee of the seventy-fifth session of the Assembly (dated 3 November 2020).

It took a long time and considerable international efforts to reach consensus on the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

Although Israel had its own deep reservations about the resolution, which have been voiced every year in its explanations of position, Israel supported the resolution for the sake of consensus, as the consistent approach of Israel has always been constructive.

It is very unfortunate that this long-standing practice was broken by the Arab Group. By imposing a new unilateral and destructive decision in 2018 entitled “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”, the Arab Group has altered the status quo.

We regret that we do not see the same enthusiasm by the advocates of that decision to solve the real threats and challenges of the Middle East.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[31 May 2021]

Mexico has been one of the main advocates of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In that regard, it actively promoted the establishment, in 1967, of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, through the adoption of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

Mexico has reiterated its unreserved support for efforts aimed at the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones. This stems from the fact that, by establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, the States that form them undertake specific obligations not to develop, acquire or use nuclear weapons and also commit themselves to preventing the deployment in their own territories of nuclear weapons belonging to another State. Militarily denuclearized zones are thus not an end in themselves, but an intermediate step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Mexico has supported the laudable efforts of the international community to achieve the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Mexico believes that the promotion of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is an important part of the commitments that forged the agreement on the indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995, as well as the agreements of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. The establishment of such a zone would help to reduce tensions in the region, while creating an atmosphere of stability and peace that could contribute to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the region.

Mexico recognizes the positive results of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, which was held from 18 to 22 November 2019, as well as the political declaration adopted by the participating States. This demonstrates the will and commitment of the States of the region regarding the desired goal, and also regarding nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Mexico urges all the States of the region to continue their active involvement in the process of establishing such a zone, taking an inclusive and transparent approach.

Mexico hopes that it will be possible to hold the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia prior to the tenth Review Conference. That multilateral meeting represents a necessary initiative to reinforce the credibility of the regime established by the Treaty, as well as to contribute to building confidence among the parties to the Treaty.

Mexico, both individually and together with other countries, will continue to support efforts to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones, in all relevant forums including at the tenth Review Conference, in the First Committee of the General Assembly and within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mexico reiterates its offer to share experiences and lessons learned during the process of establishing the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]

[26 April 2021]

The Syrian Arab Republic considers the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East to be one of the most important nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures. Unfortunately, the establishment of such a zone has long been delayed, despite significant international momentum in support of that endeavour. We hope that the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in 2019 was the first step toward the establishment of that zone.

The Syrian Arab Republic participated actively in the work of the first session of the Conference, which was held from 18 to 22 November 2019 and chaired by Jordan. All States from the region, except Israel, participated in the session, and four of the five nuclear-weapon States, but regrettably not the United States, were in attendance. Israel blatantly ignored the convening of the first session of the Conference, thereby reaffirming that it flouts all relevant Security Council resolutions and the resolutions of the General Assembly, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other international forums. The failure of the United States to attend that session is in line with its ongoing support for the destructive policies that Israel pursues in the region and its efforts to undermine the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the central and vital role of the United Nations in the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, in accordance well-known international resolutions and terms of reference, in particular Security Council resolution [487 \(1981\)](#), the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Middle East action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Syrian Arab Republic considers the establishment of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, to be an important means of achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Achieving those objectives would undoubtedly help promote regional and international peace and security.

The Syrian Arab Republic points out that the failure to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East is a major setback for the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, because the decision to extend the treaty indefinitely adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference was part of a deal under which nuclear-weapon States pledged to look into the concerns of many Middle East States parties to the Treaty, including, in particular, the need to pressure Israel to accede to the Treaty, place all its nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime without condition or delay, and eliminate all its nuclear military capabilities, which are not subject to any kind of international control.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its support for the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In that Document, the parties confirmed that the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference remains in effect until its goals and objectives have been

achieved, and that it is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

The Syrian Arab Republic has consistently supported and always made positive contributions to the international disarmament regime. Syria believes that strengthening the multilateral framework for disarmament and non-proliferation is one of the most important ways of promoting international peace and security, political stability and sustainable development. The Syrian Arab Republic, in keeping with its belief that multilateral action is an important element of disarmament and non-proliferation, acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968, thus becoming one of the first countries from the Middle East region to do so. In addition, it has reaffirmed that it continues to fulfil its international obligations under the Treaty by participating in all international forums on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Syrian Arab Republic has stressed the importance of working earnestly towards the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty: complete nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Syrian Arab Republic believes in the importance of the disarmament regime for regional and international security and peace. Accordingly, it has acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, an instrument to which Israel is not yet a party. That action further demonstrates how earnestly the Syrian Arab Republic is striving to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East.

In order to realize the aims of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the provisions concerning the universality of the Treaty that are set out in its article VI must be achieved. However, Israel continues to obstruct international efforts to attain that goal. It is the only party in the Middle East region that has not acceded to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and the only party that has refused to subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime. It has no regard for how its conduct destabilizes peace, security and stability in the region, and it receives support from the United States of America for failing to comply with the relevant international resolutions and to uphold the purposes of the Treaty.

The efforts of the Syrian Arab Republic to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East have not been limited to the relevant resolution that was adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. In April 2003, Syria, when it was a member of the Security Council, launched an initiative to rid the Middle East region of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. However, progress on that initiative was hampered by the obstruction of certain influential States in the Council. The Syrian Arab Republic reintroduced that initiative by submitting a draft resolution to the Security Council in December of that same year and putting it in blue. However, the United States threatened to veto the proposed resolution, in keeping with its policy of allowing Israel to avoid acceding to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State or committing to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

There is continuing and increasing concern because Israel refuses to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and is building secret nuclear facilities near the city of Dimona. Recent media reports have included satellite images of the site that show the scale of Israeli construction activities. Those actions are a clear evidence of the subversive conduct of Israel in the region. Such conduct, which increases tension and is deeply disturbing, underscores the importance of putting greater pressure on Israel to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that nuclear-weapon States must undertake, in accordance with their obligations of under article I of the Treaty, not to transfer to Israel any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or place any such weapons or devices under its direct or indirect control, and not to assist, encourage or induce Israel in any way whatsoever to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or gain control over such weapons or explosive devices by any other means.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East should in no way be linked to the peace process in the region. The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that any identification of the countries in the Middle East region for this purpose in no way constitutes a definition of the region.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that is vital to fully implement all international resolutions related to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, including, in particular, Security Council resolution [487 \(1981\)](#), the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, and the Middle East action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference. The Syrian Arab Republic once again reiterates its willingness to cooperate with the Secretary-General towards achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

[Original: Spanish]
[11 May 2021]

Pursuant to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution [75/33](#) entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, in which all States are requested to report to the Secretary-General on the initiatives and measures that they have taken with respect to the implementation of that resolution, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to make the following remarks.

It is absolutely urgent to make progress in the implementation of the decision adopted at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, Venezuela shares the aspiration of the vast majority of the States in the Middle East to achieve the establishment of such a zone by convening an international conference for that purpose.

It is justified for the international community to make additional efforts to persuade the Government of the State of Israel to heed the appeals for non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peace in the Middle East and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, as an important confidence-building measure in the region and as a way of strengthening international peace and security.

It is imperative for the State of Israel to respond favourably to the appeals in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on this issue and, accordingly, Venezuela calls upon it to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as well as other relevant international legal instruments to which it is not yet a party, in order to join the efforts of the international community in favour of nuclear disarmament, and with the aim of building an atmosphere of trust, which is essential for achieving lasting and necessary peace in the Middle East.

IV. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]

[31 May 2021]

The 2016 European Union Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy and the 2003 European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction are founded on the conviction that a multilateral approach to security, including disarmament and non-proliferation, provides the best way to maintain international order.

The Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of 13 July 2008, establishing the Union for the Mediterranean, reaffirmed the common aspiration to achieve peace and regional security as set out in the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference held on 27 and 28 November 1995. The Barcelona Declaration promotes regional security by acting, inter alia, in favour of nuclear, chemical and biological non-proliferation, adhering to regional arrangements such as zones free of nuclear weapons, including their verification regimes, as well as by fulfilling in good faith the commitments of the signatories to the Barcelona Declaration under arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation conventions.

The parties to the Union for the Mediterranean agreed to pursue a mutually and effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to consider practical steps, inter alia, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the excessive accumulation of conventional arms.

The European Union reiterates its full support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which has laid the foundation for establishing nuclear-free zones around the world, as well as the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The European Union remains committed to the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The European Union continues to strongly support the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference on the Middle East and reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, as agreed by States parties to the Treaty. The path for action as set out in the 2010 Review Conference action plan remains the most promising basis on which to proceed.

The European Union is of the view that, as stated in the 2010 Review Conference action plan, such zones can be established only on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between all States of the region concerned. The European Union maintains the view that dialogue and building confidence among stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree on arrangements for a meaningful conference, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them, as decided by the 2010 Review Conference. The process must be inclusive for it to be effective, and proposals that force the issue risk failure.

The European Union has consistently presented that position at the United Nations, as was also the case in recent United Nations discussions related to concrete proposals on how to take the process forward. The European Union reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, presented on 24 May 2018, in which the Secretary-General pledges to work with States Members of the United Nations to

strengthen and consolidate nuclear-weapon-free zones, including by supporting the further establishment of such zones, including in the Middle East. The European Union takes note of the Conferences on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, held in 2019 and 2020 in New York. The European Union calls upon all parties to further their efforts to build an inclusive and consensus-based process, including all States of the region, taking into account the security concerns of all those States and covering all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, in line with the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference and the final outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference. The European Union reconfirms its readiness to assist the process leading to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as it has done in the past by facilitating dialogue among States of the region. Specific legislative acts have been adopted at the European Union to support United Nations work in that regard. Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/809 supports the implementation of Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), where assistance requests from States to take additional, practical steps to implement the obligations of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) at the national level give priority to States from, inter alia, the Gulf and Middle East region.

A number of legislative acts adopted by the European Union in support of the goal of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction are ongoing, notably Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/615 of 15 April 2019 in support activities leading up to the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In addition, at the meeting of the First Committee in 2020, the European Union delivered a specific statement on the Middle East in which it repeated its support of the creation of such a zone.

Similarly, Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/938 of 6 June 2019 in support of a process of confidence-building leading to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is still ongoing. The decision supports efforts by the European Union to bring the process forward, as was done in 2011 and in 2012 respectively. It aims to enhance confidence-building through a number of seminars, workshops and research projects, whose objective is to reach a deeper collective understanding of the successes and failures related to previous efforts and which would eventually allow for ideas on new avenues and proposals leading to a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The project will continue for three years.

Furthermore, Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/538 of 1 April 2019 supports key activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, including the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the implementation of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 on addressing the threat from chemical weapons use, adopted on 27 June 2018 at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The European Union also confirms its readiness to continue to assist the Middle East region, through the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centers of Excellence Initiative, which was launched in response to the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of countries outside the European Union to mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks. The Centers of Excellence established in Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates all contribute to enhanced capacity-building in the region.

The European Union continues to call upon all States in the region, which have not yet done so, to accede to and abide by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,

and to conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, the Additional Protocol and, as applicable, a modified Small Quantities Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Also, subscribing to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missiles Proliferation could contribute to regional confidence-building, which is necessary for progress towards a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.
