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Comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [79/241](#) and contains a compilation of views received from Member States, existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, regional organizations, organizations of the United Nations system with a special competence in disarmament and non-proliferation, disarmament and peace-related institutes and non-governmental organizations on the issues that belong to the scope of the aforementioned study.



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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to requests contained in General Assembly resolution [79/241](#) on a comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects.
2. In operative paragraph 5 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the issues that belong to the scope of the aforementioned study and to submit a report thereon before the end of the seventy-ninth session of the Assembly.
3. In operative paragraph 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, regional organizations, organizations of the United Nations system with a special competence in disarmament and non-proliferation, disarmament and peace-related institutes and relevant non-governmental organizations to communicate their views on the issues that belong to the scope of the aforementioned study and submit a report thereon before the end of the seventy-ninth session of the Assembly.
4. By a note verbale dated 14 February 2025, Member States, relevant United Nations entities and international organizations were invited to communicate their views on the issue. By a letter dated 21 February 2025, relevant disarmament-related institutes and non-governmental organizations were invited to do the same. Views and executive summaries of views received from aforementioned stakeholders are included in section II; views in full and any replies received after the deadline will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs,¹ in the original language of submission only. No addenda will be issued.

II. Replies received from Governments

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]
[27 May 2025]

Nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute significantly to international peace and security by restricting the use or threat of use of such weapons against States in the nuclear-free zone; support should continue to be provided for the establishment and consolidation of such zones.

While the establishment of freely negotiated nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions does not replace the nuclear disarmament obligations of nuclear-weapon States, it can at least help to restore confidence that, until such disarmament takes place, non-nuclear-weapon States will not be threatened with nuclear weapons.

It is important to ensure full adherence to and compliance with the obligations arising from the treaties establishing such zones on the part of the countries of the respective regions and on the part of nuclear-weapon States, through the protocols to those treaties.

In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), which established the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, has been in force since 1969. The Treaty also established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, of whose Council Argentina is a member, and which has a control system and Additional Protocols that have been

¹ <https://meetings.unoda.org>.

adopted by nuclear-weapon States. The Agency has established a dialogue mechanism with nuclear-weapon States, and the conclusions of that dialogue were set out in a working paper entitled “Implementing obligations and commitments to avoid nuclear risk: Lessons from the dialogue of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean with the nuclear-weapon States” (NPT/CONF.2026/PC.III/WP.34), which was submitted to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In the working paper, the States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco highlight the importance of dialogue and exchanges of views on how to better respect the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones in general, and propose that a road map be adopted to address the different perspectives surrounding interpretative declarations, ensuring a balanced and constructive exchange.

Argentina urges nuclear-weapon States to formally withdraw their interpretative declarations to the Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco – declarations that, in some cases, amount to actual reservations to the Treaty, which are prohibited.

Austria

[Original: English]
[29 May 2025]

Austria welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on resolution 79/241 on the comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, adopted by the General Assembly on 24 December 2024, which Austria co-sponsored.

Austria is a staunch supporter of nuclear-weapon-free-zones and convinced of their crucial contribution to promoting global and regional peace and security, strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributing to the achievement of nuclear disarmament objectives.

In 1999, Austria adopted a federal constitutional law on a nuclear-free Austria,¹ which states in its paragraph 1 that nuclear weapons must not be manufactured, stored, transported, tested or used in Austria and that facilities for stationing nuclear weapons must not be set up. Austria therefore has a constitutionally guaranteed nuclear-free status but has decided not to seek international recognition of this status, as was done by Mongolia. However, Austria de facto has met the key legal requirements of a nuclear-weapon-free zone since 1999. This legal status was further strengthened by Austria’s ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2018.

Austria has consistently spoken out in support of all established nuclear-weapon-free zones and co-sponsored or voted for General Assembly resolutions dealing with such zones. Austria also supports the goal of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in line with the decisions taken at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has supported the relevant decisions taken in the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Austria offered to host the conference for the establishment of the zone foreseen by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Austria also supports the nuclear-free status of Mongolia. In 2015, Austria participated as an observer in the third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia.

¹ www.ris.bka.gv.at.

Austria shares the view expressed in the resolution that nuclear-weapon-free zones could be strengthened by a new comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects and that such a study would be useful in the light of developments in international law related to nuclear-weapon-free zones and the emergence of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in densely populated areas.

Austria has also supported action 9 of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty action plan, which encouraged States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where no such zone yet exists. One such region is Europe. Several attempts took place during the cold war period to discuss the establishment of such a zone in Europe but did not get any traction. In furtherance of the implementation of action 9, Austria and Switzerland commissioned the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt² to prepare a comprehensive scientific study to provide a detailed analysis of the various aspects of a potential nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe. The study, entitled *A Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in Europe: Concept-Problems-Chances*,³ was presented at side events in Geneva and Vienna in 2014 and 2015, as well as at the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to the Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia.

As a result of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, in violation of the political security guarantees given in the Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and combined with unacceptable nuclear threats, the security situation in Europe has deteriorated dramatically. As a consequence, nuclear risks in Europe have risen and more emphasis is put on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence in the European security discourse. A nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe therefore may not appear to be a feasible prospect for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, it could be beneficial in discussions about a future European security architecture to consider measures that reduce nuclear risks and contribute to confidence-building and nuclear de-escalation, and nuclear-weapon-free zone-related ideas might be revisited at some stage in the future. The above-mentioned study could be a useful contribution to the comprehensive study mandated by resolution 79/241.

Austria had also offered the facilitator of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, Jaako Laajava, the use of its experience in the nuclear security and safety context, as a country critical of energy generation from nuclear fission, with neighbouring countries relying on such power generation. Austria established a system of bilateral nuclear information agreements with its neighbours to build confidence and trust. Similarly, peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Middle East – while not directly related – could be used to enhance mutual trust and cooperation through the establishment of such a system, which could help build confidence and thereby benefit work on the zone.

Brazil

[Original: English]
[30 May 2025]

Executive summary

The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean emerged from a proposal by Brazilian Foreign Minister Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco in 1962, gaining momentum after the Cuban missile crisis highlighted nuclear threats in the region. As a landmark instrument, it established the first nuclear-

² www.prif.org.

³ Available at www.bmeia.gv.at.

weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, opening for signature in 1967 and entering into force in 1969. Today, with 33 States Parties, it covers the entire Latin American and Caribbean region and plays a fundamental role in the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, being fully compatible with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and other treaties. Brazil identifies several pioneering aspects of the Treaty of Tlatelolco that offer valuable lessons for future nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as for cooperation initiatives between such zones:

(a) **Exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.** Preceding the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco binds its States Parties to use nuclear material and facilities exclusively for peaceful purposes. This commitment is non-discriminatory, applying equally to all Parties, and its provisions influenced the 1991 bilateral agreement between Brazil and Argentina that created the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials;

(b) **Negative security assurances.** The Treaty includes two innovative additional protocols that served as references for other nuclear-weapon-free zones. Protocol I requires extra-continental States with non-autonomous territories in the region to respect the denuclearization statute, while Protocol II obliges nuclear-weapon States to refrain from using nuclear weapons against members of the zone;

(c) **Control system committed to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards.** Similar to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco's control system relies on the IAEA safeguards regime. Contracting Parties are required to conclude safeguards agreements with IAEA and report to it. The Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) also play distinct roles in verifying compliance, with the former's semi-annual declarations to the latter serving as compliance statements for Brazil and Argentina;

(d) **Dedicated body for compliance.** The Treaty established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean to ensure compliance with its obligations, serving as a permanent channel for communication, negotiation and mutual verification of shared commitments. The Agency has been crucial for institutionalizing the Treaty, fostering confidence-building and dispelling uncertainty. It also promotes education for disarmament and non-proliferation across the region;

(e) **Flexible mechanism of entry into force.** While a general rule required ratification by all States in the area, all nuclear-weapon States and all States with responsibility for territories in the area, alongside the conclusion of IAEA safeguards agreements, signatories could waive these requirements. This flexibility ensured that States could adhere to the regional regime at their own pace without being forced to or prevented by others.

In conclusion, the Treaty of Tlatelolco offers important lessons for developing confidence-building mechanisms in disarmament and non-proliferation. Its success contains ideas to draw upon when considering the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as the proposed Middle East zone. Brazil advocates for enhanced cooperation mechanisms among existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia, through regular information exchanges and sharing of best practices, aiming towards a potential de facto nuclear-weapon-free zone covering the entire southern hemisphere. This cooperation should also focus on engaging nuclear-weapon States to ensure that their protocols and declarations are fully compatible with

the spirit and objectives of nuclear-weapon-free zones, thereby strengthening negative security assurances and the global norm against nuclear weapon use.

China

[Original: Chinese]

[29 May 2025]

Position of the Government of China on a comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 79/241, “Comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects”, the position of the Government of China is set out below.

1. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a key step towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. It helps to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and build a balanced, effective and sustainable regional security architecture conducive to the achievement of common and universal security worldwide, ensuring the peaceful and stable development of all countries for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

2. The international community should continue to support the countries concerned in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in accordance with article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the principles and guidelines adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1999. Both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States should refrain from actions that disregard or undermine the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

3. Non-nuclear-weapon States have contributed significantly to the aim of international nuclear non-proliferation by establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. Unfortunately, to date only Additional Protocol II to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean has been ratified by all five nuclear-weapon States. Nuclear-weapon States should support efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, respect the legal status of nuclear-weapon-free zones and sign and ratify, as soon as possible, all relevant protocols additional to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties that are open for signature. Proposals and efforts for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should be supported. Israel should accede without delay, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, conscientiously fulfil the relevant obligations and promptly sign and ratify a comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

4. Nuclear-weapon States have provided security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States through such means as United Nations Security Council resolutions, national statements and the signature and ratification of protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, but in most cases have done so with conditions attached. Nuclear-weapon-free zones do not yet cover all regions or all non-nuclear-weapon States. For example, practical obstacles have hindered the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons. In the new security situation, the issue of providing negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones has taken on greater importance and urgency.

5. The international community should support the conclusion, as soon as possible, of an international legal instrument to provide assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones against the use or threat of use of

nuclear weapons and should discuss this issue in depth, in forums such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process. Pending the completion of negotiations on such an international legal instrument, all nuclear-weapon States should publicly announce that they unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones.

6. The role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in non-proliferation is widely recognized, but the profound impact and potential role of such arrangements in a broader range of areas, such as promoting security dialogue among countries in the region, reducing military expenditure and enhancing understanding and mutual trust among countries, and establishing other regional security structures, are worthy of further study by the international community. For example, the Latin American nuclear-weapon-free zone has gradually evolved into a “zone of peace”. In January 2014, at its second summit, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States adopted the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

7. The political, legal, technological and other impacts that individual nuclear-weapon States have had on existing and new nuclear-weapon-free zones through actions such as creating military alliances and establishing or strengthening “nuclear sharing” and “extended deterrence” arrangements are also worthy of in-depth discussion. Do military alliances between States members of nuclear-weapon-free zones and individual nuclear-weapon States, and the establishment of military installations with nuclear weapons capability within those member States’ territories, undermine the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones? Will participation in such arrangements significantly reduce the political will of non-nuclear-weapon States to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones or to conclude an international legal instrument on security assurances? These questions are increasingly attracting the international community’s attention.

8. The nuclear submarine cooperation among the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia is the first instance in which nuclear-weapon States have transferred nuclear submarine power reactors and large quantities of weapons-grade highly enriched uranium to a non-nuclear-weapon State, contrary to the object and purpose of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and poses a serious risk of nuclear proliferation. This action will undermine the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the efforts of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to establish the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

9. China firmly supports international efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, has always pursued a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and has explicitly and unconditionally undertaken not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. To date, China has signed and ratified all the protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties that have been opened for signature and is willing to take the lead in signing the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. China has issued a concept paper on the Global Security Initiative unequivocally supporting the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones by countries in relevant regions.

China hopes that these views will be reflected in the relevant report of the Secretary-General.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[28 May 2025]

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important contribution to international efforts to promote the total elimination of nuclear weapons by all States in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, without reservations or limitations.

They also represent a concrete legal achievement and an essential tool in the areas of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation by promoting peace and stability at the regional and international levels, in order to prohibit the possession, acquisition, development, testing, manufacturing, production, stockpiling, deployment and use of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) set a historic precedent by establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region. The Treaty has become a political, legal and institutional benchmark for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world.

Cuba also takes pride in the adoption, at the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in 2014, of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, in which the Heads of State and Government declare the commitment of the States of the region to continue promoting nuclear disarmament as a priority objective and to contribute to general and complete disarmament, in order to promote confidence-building among nations.

The experience of Latin America and the Caribbean demonstrates that negotiation and regional cooperation are feasible for advancing towards the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in other regions of the world.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, apart from being a major contribution to the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, would be a momentous step forward – now needed more than ever – in the peace process in that region.

Cuba believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens international peace and security and significantly contributes to the achievement of nuclear disarmament. It urges all States to continue to make concrete progress in strengthening all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Egypt

[Original: English]
[29 May 2025]

Executive summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [79/241](#), Egypt shares its views on the scope of the comprehensive study on the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects.

This resolution marks a step forward to foster multilateralism in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has played a pivotal role in freeing the parts of the southern hemisphere covered by the existing nuclear-weapon-

free zones. Creating new nuclear-weapon-free zones, where they do not exist, has now become more pressing, as nuclear-weapon States and States not Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons continue to develop nuclear arsenals. The establishment of new zones, in particular in the Middle East, should be pursued with utmost urgency.

Conducting a comprehensive study on the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones provides an opportunity to recall 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, and foster nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

The first comprehensive study, in 1975, was conducted less than 10 years after the conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which affirmed, by virtue of its article VII, the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories. At the time, there were only two existing nuclear-weapon-free zones (the zone in Latin America and the Caribbean pursuant to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and the zone pursuant to the Antarctic Treaty in 1959). There were also proposals for the establishment of new zones, where they did not exist, including the proposal in a 1974 General Assembly resolution to establish a zone free from nuclear weapons in the Middle East. In addition, the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies obliged State parties not to place in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction.

Over the last five decades, progress in nuclear-weapon-free zones has taken place, *inter alia*:

(a) The treaties establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones: the 1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the 1995 Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the 1996 African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the 2006 Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. Mongolia was recognized as a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone in 2001;

(b) The tenth special session of the General Assembly asserted that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements or arrangements freely arrived at, and full compliance with those agreements or arrangements, thus ensuring that the zones are free from nuclear weapons, and respect for such zones by nuclear-weapon States constitute an important disarmament measure. It stated that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would enhance international peace and security;

(c) 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, co-sponsored by the three Treaty depositary States, which remains valid until its objectives are fully realized. The action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons recognizes this resolution as an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Review Conference and as an integral component of the package based on which the Treaty was extended indefinitely;

(d) The 1999 Guidelines of the Disarmament Commission on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned;

(e) The adoption of General Assembly decision 73/546 in 2018, entrusting the Secretary-General with convening an annual United Nations 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 on the Middle East 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, the other two nuclear-weapon States and relevant international organizations are invited to participate. Five sessions of the conferences were held and adopted reports containing important elements on the scope and obligations of the envisaged treaty;

(f) Three international Conferences of States Parties and signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which adopted three declarations. The General Assembly has agreed on convening the fourth conference, to be held at a later date.

Conducting a new study provides an opportunity to build on these developments, with a view to solidifying agreed literature and principles, and strengthening the legal and political architecture.

The scope of the envisaged study should focus on:

(a) The objectives in the establishment of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, taking into consideration their distinct characteristics, structure and institutional mechanisms, and ways to strengthen these zones and assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and to enhance cooperation among them;

(b) Prospects for the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, along with a review of all initiatives and efforts aimed at establishing new zones, particularly efforts to establish a zone in the Middle East, given the importance of such a zone in maintaining regional and global peace, and in preserving the credibility of the non-proliferation regime. In this regard, the constructive atmosphere and the deliberations at the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction could represent an input that can be considered in the study. The Conference agreed at its fifth session to provide input to the comprehensive study;

(c) The impact of nuclear-weapon-free zones on regional and global peace and cooperation, including the following: nuclear risk reduction; renouncing nuclear weapons in the region concerned; strengthening nuclear non-proliferation, while drawing from lessons learned without prejudice to the distinct character of every zone; and post-treaty cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

France

[Original: French]
[30 May 2025]

France welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly during its seventy-ninth session of resolution [79/241](#), in which the Assembly calls for a comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects.¹

I. Nuclear-weapon-free zones offer a pragmatic and appealing regional approach that supports the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are based on an approach grounded in regional realities, whereby the specific geopolitical contexts of each zone are considered.

¹ The text of the full contribution is available on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are underpinned by a framework that is based on international law and consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute to progress towards the ultimate goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world while upholding the principle of undiminished security for all.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones serve as a platform for the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The effectiveness of nuclear-weapon-free zones is strengthened by their inclusivity and the involvement of nuclear-weapon States.

II. Among the security assurances that it grants, France gives particular attention to nuclear-weapon-free zones

1. The support provided by France is part of a broader framework of security assurances granted to non-nuclear-weapon States that comply with their non-proliferation obligations

Since 1982, France has provided negative security assurances to more than 100 non-nuclear-weapon States that comply with their non-proliferation obligations.

As indicated in Security Council resolution [984 \(1995\)](#), the granting of negative security assurances by nuclear-weapon States shall in no way prevent the exercise of the right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The negative security assurances granted by France have been reaffirmed at the highest level.

France gives full consideration to the territories under its sovereignty that fall within the geographical scope of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

2. France views nuclear-weapon-free zones as a platform for regional dialogue with the States of the regions concerned

France considers the granting of negative security assurances within a regional framework to be a key pathway for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

France is a Party to almost all the protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

France supports the initiative to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

France wishes to continue engaging in dialogue with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with a view to signing the Additional Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty).

III. Recommended directions for the study

As part of the comprehensive study requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [79/241](#), France recommends exploring several key areas.

1. Methodological approach: building on achievements and promoting best practices

The study should involve a comparative mapping of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and an analysis of the means of their implementation and the lessons

learned from their monitoring and verification mechanisms to support the dissemination of best practices.

2. *Cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency: strengthening non-proliferation through robust safeguards*

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are underpinned by the obligation to conclude safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The study could highlight the advantages of the widespread adoption of the additional protocol as a verification standard, as well as the technical cooperation initiatives enabled by the trust cultivated in these zones.

3. *Relationship with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty*

The prohibition of nuclear testing is a common aspect of all the nuclear-weapon-free zones. The study could explore existing synergies between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the International Monitoring System under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, highlighting the role of such zones in strengthening the global norm against testing.

4. *Preservation and strengthening of the consensus on prohibiting the placement of nuclear weapons in Antarctica and outer space, including on the Moon and other celestial bodies*

France believes that the study must recognize such international obligations as foundational to the stability of those areas and recommend the strengthening of this historic consensus. The legal integrity of those obligations must be preserved, and any attempt to circumvent or reinterpret them must be prevented. It is essential to remain vigilant in the face of technological developments, the intensification of space activities and possible challenges to the multilateral commitment to disarmament.

5. *Dialogue between States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and nuclear-weapon States*

[The study could emphasize the need for dialogue between nuclear-weapon States and States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, with a view to strengthening negative security assurances and fostering mutual understanding of respective security interests].

India

[Original: English]
[30 May 2025]

India believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. The initiative to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones should emanate exclusively from States within the region concerned and be pursued by all the States of that region.

India's position is consistent with the following provisions contained in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, which underlined that:

(a) The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned constitutes an important disarmament measure;

(b) The process of establishing such zones in different parts of the world should be encouraged, with the ultimate objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons;

(c) The States participating in such zones should undertake to comply fully with all the objectives, purposes and principles of the agreements or arrangements establishing the zones, thus ensuring that they are genuinely free from nuclear weapons.

India's position is also consistent with the guidelines and principles on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones adopted by consensus by the Disarmament Commission in 1999, which stated that:

(a) Nuclear-weapon-free zones should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned;

(b) The initiative to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones should emanate exclusively from the States within the region concerned and be pursued by all States of that region;

(c) All the States of the region should participate in the negotiations and the establishment of such zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned;

(d) The process of establishing the zone should take into account all characteristics of the region concerned.

India reiterates the above-mentioned understandings, agreed by consensus, with regard to nuclear-weapon-free zones. India further underlines that it supports the establishment of such zones in different regions of the world, provided that suitable conditions exist in a particular region and the zone is proposed to be established with the initiative of an agreement among the countries in that region. Any proposal for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in a particular region has to be considered on its merits.

Further, it must take into account the region's special features and geographical extent. As conditions for the establishment of such zones differ from continent to continent, it is not possible to devise a single formula or to lay down general principles which can cover all such cases.

As a nuclear-weapon State, India respects the sovereign choice of non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. India, in general, conveys its unambiguous assurances to respect the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

It needs to be fully examined whether the proposed study will have any added value to the conclusions agreed by United Nations Member States.

India's position on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is well known. India underlines that nuclear-weapon-free zones possess an independent and a distinct legal identity. Predating the Treaty, such zones address region-specific security concerns within clearly delineated geographical boundaries.

India, therefore, underscores that the consideration of nuclear-weapon-free zones must be undertaken in a non-discriminatory manner and within an inclusive framework comprising all States possessing nuclear weapons.

Kazakhstan

[Original: English]
[30 May 2025]

Executive summary

Kazakhstan remains a consistent supporter of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a founding member of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone and champion of the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda and its action 5 on strengthening such zones.

On the occasion of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, Kazakhstan, in cooperation with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, organized two events in Astana in 2019 and 2024, bringing together representatives of all existing treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia, as well as observers from relevant international, regional and civil society organizations, for the purpose of strengthening cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones. Both meetings were also attended by the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The following observations were made by Kazakhstan in its national capacity as the chair of the second workshop on fostering cooperation and enhancing consultation mechanisms among the existing nuclear-weapons-free zones, convened on 27 and 28 August 2024 in Astana, and reflects to the best of its knowledge what transpired at the workshop with regard to the matters discussed:

(a) Representatives of the nuclear-weapon-free zone States and their secretariats and points of contact, as well as other interested participants, underscored the importance of continuing the tradition of holding such meetings, including retreat-style gatherings, on the margins of the General Assembly, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Parties emphasized the value of regular consultations and exchanges of experience between zones to further institutionalize these efforts;

(b) Representatives noted that other joint activities could be considered, including joint statements in relevant forums and an annual joint resolution at the General Assembly. It was noted that a joint resolution could assist in coordinating actions and presenting a united front to strengthen the regime established by the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, including the institutionalization of regular nuclear-weapon-free zone meetings. A resolution could also potentially support the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones;

(c) Representatives underscored the need to take steps towards further institutionalizing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties by establishing working/executive bodies or regional organizations, where practical. The examples of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and the African Commission on Nuclear Energy were noted as successful models to that end;

(d) Representatives noted positively the suggestion to establish a consultative group to regularly exchange information on zonal activities and coordinate positions;

(e) Representatives welcomed the intention of Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean members to present a resolution on a second comprehensive study on nuclear-weapon-free zones, noting that the last such study had been conducted in the 1970s before most nuclear-weapon-free zones had been established, and looked forward to receiving further details;

(f) Representatives highlighted that the nuclear-weapon-free zone portal operated by the Office for Disarmament Affairs served as a central platform for communication between zones, providing comprehensive information on nuclear-weapon-free zones, its conferences and other joint activities. Members of nuclear-weapon-free zones were called upon to support the Office in enhancing the portal, including by providing regular updates and ensuring that it remained current and continued to serve as an effective tool for strengthening interzone cooperation and coordination, and for educational purposes;

(g) Representatives should continue the practice of inviting representatives from other nuclear-weapon-free zones to regional meetings, following the successful example of cooperation between the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and the African Commission on Nuclear Energy. That practice was highlighted as a way to reinforce collaboration and mutual learning between zones;

(h) Representatives emphasized the need for the signature and ratification of relevant protocols to all nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties by the nuclear-weapon States and for the removal of any interpretative declarations to those protocols, stressing that the provision of security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States was essential to the full implementation of the treaties;

(i) Representatives underscored the importance of intensifying efforts to promote the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, with a special focus on regions such as the Arctic, North-East Asia and Central Europe. In particular, ongoing efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction highlighted the critical need for regional cooperation and sustained diplomacy;

(j) Representatives regretted the inability to convene the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia and noted the suggestion to organize a preparatory meeting on the margins of the First Committee of the General Assembly that could help to address the obstacles to the convening of the fourth Conference;

(k) Representatives welcomed calls for further outreach efforts to promote disarmament education, particularly among young people. The important role of civil society in promoting nuclear-weapon-free zones was also welcomed. Support for research on and analysis of key aspects of nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as negative security assurances and interpretive protocol declarations, to strengthen understanding and engagement was encouraged;

(l) Representatives underscored the importance of continued cooperation with both the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in ensuring compliance with non-proliferation commitments and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy within the framework of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. Collaboration with those organizations was emphasized as crucial for reinforcing the integrity of nuclear-weapon-free zones and supporting international disarmament efforts;

(m) Representatives noted the complementarity between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and highlighted the potential for enhanced cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones and States Parties and signatories to the Treaty. It was suggested that joint diplomatic efforts, public awareness campaigns and coordinated outreach to States not Parties could be useful endeavours. It was also noted that the proposed international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation from the consequences of nuclear testing, if established, could facilitate further universalization of the Treaty;

(n) It was noted that such workshops may be convened on a more frequent basis and participants were invited to consider that issue.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[20 May 2025]

Lebanon is a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and it works closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure compliance with its obligations and that Lebanese territory is not used for any activities that contravene the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Lebanon does not possess nuclear weapons and the Lebanese army does not engage in any activity involving the manufacture, transfer, development and possession of any nuclear material or weapons.

The Lebanese army strives to train its personnel to respond to the challenges associated with nuclear weapons, with regard to both detecting nuclear material and addressing any potential threats.

Israel possesses nuclear weapons and is not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This reality poses a threat and is a source of concern to Lebanon, owing to the implications of any use of such weapons, in particular in light of the prevailing tensions and threats from Israel. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would diminish those threats.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[30 May 2025]

Mexico is submitting this executive summary¹ with a view to determining the scope of the comprehensive study on nuclear-weapon-free zones requested in General Assembly resolution 79/241. This contribution is based on the experience of Mexico in promoting the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the first legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons in a densely populated region.

Definition and purpose of nuclear-weapon-free zones

A nuclear-weapon-free zone is a geographical area in which States, by sovereign decision, make legally binding commitments to prohibit the use, testing, manufacturing, acquisition, deployment and possession of nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute to regional and international peace and security by definitively excluding nuclear weapons, and are an interim step towards their complete elimination.

An integral goal of nuclear-weapon-free zones is to strengthen the security of their members, which requires that nuclear-weapon States, especially those recognized by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, respect the zones and provide negative security assurances. Mexico maintains that these assurances are a legitimate requirement in view of the active commitment of the States belonging to nuclear-weapon-free zones to disarmament and non-proliferation.

¹ The full contribution is available on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Contribution to international regimes

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have strengthened the nuclear non-proliferation regime, in particular by supplementing and expanding the obligations set out in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Treaty of Tlatelolco precedes the Non-Proliferation Treaty and established a normative precedent by providing a legal definition of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco was the first multilateral agreement to ban nuclear testing, which demonstrates the relevance of nuclear-weapon-free zones as preventative tools. The Latin American and Caribbean region has also achieved the universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which reinforces the region's position as a leader in terms of non-proliferation.

Institutions and verification

Mexico highlights the unique nature of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which ensures the effective implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco through its control system and its role as a regional coordination mechanism. No other nuclear-weapon-free zone has established a body with comparable characteristics. Its structure should therefore be analysed as a possible model.

With regard to verification, Mexico underscores that nuclear-weapon-free zones must be supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system, as in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean even before the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It also underlines the usefulness of complementary regional mechanisms, such as the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, which has promoted transparency and mutual trust. Furthermore, Mexico proposes that the potential role of emerging technologies, including remote sensors and artificial intelligence, be considered, with a view to building technical verification capacities.

Relationship with nuclear-weapon States and security assurances

It is imperative that nuclear-weapon States commit themselves to the protocols of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. In the case of Latin America, all the nuclear-weapon States have ratified the Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, although some of them maintain interpretative declarations, which must be reconsidered. Mexico proposes that the study analyse ways to promote the ratification of pending protocols and encourage the withdrawal of reservations that hinder the effectiveness of the negative security assurances.

Education, coordination and normative harmonization

Mexico appreciates the efforts of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean relating to disarmament education and the promotion of a culture of peace. It suggests that the study examine how the institutions of nuclear-weapon-free zones can strengthen these objectives.

Mexico considers it important to identify synergies between different international legal instruments, such as nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Normative harmonization among these treaties could facilitate joint outreach activities and promote the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Strengthening international cooperation

Mexico believes that closer collaboration between different nuclear-weapon-free zones can maximize their collective impact. The study should explore ways of strengthening this cooperation, such as:

- Regular informal meetings of the representatives of nuclear-weapon-free zones at United Nations Headquarters
- The appointment of focal points in different United Nations headquarters duty stations to ensure constant communication
- Increased political coordination among zones in forums such as the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- The development of joint disarmament training and education programmes
- Encouragement of participation by the representatives of different zones in regional meetings

Mexico also proposes that the possibility of establishing an interregional advisory group among States belonging to nuclear-weapon-free zones be considered in order to facilitate the exchange of information and coordinate diplomatic initiatives.

Fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia

Mexico recommends that the study examine ways to facilitate progress towards convening the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia. It proposes that consideration be given to the holding of preparatory meetings on the margins of the First Committee of the General Assembly, in order to overcome the political and logistical obstacles that have prevented the Conference from being convened.

Conclusion

Mexico reaffirms that nuclear-weapon-free zones do not only contribute to regional stability, but are also fundamental pillars of the international nuclear disarmament regime. It emphasizes that the study requested in General Assembly resolution [79/241](#) is a key opportunity to systematize good practices, identify common challenges, analyse existing institutions and strengthen cooperation between zones, with a view to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Morocco

[Original: English]
[27 May 2025]

Joint contribution of the sixth Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction to the comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects

The Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, established pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546 and in line with 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, has incrementally advanced in its work since 2019.

The present joint contribution serves to highlight the progress and achievements of the Conference, including the establishment of sustainable organizational and procedural requirements for substantive discussions, the development of an index of thematic topics and the exploration of key technical dimensions of the establishment of such a zone. These dimensions include core obligations, verification mechanisms, the right to peaceful uses and processes for addressing obstacles thereto, dispute settlement and negative security assurances. In the present document, the characteristics, key principles and main challenges of the zone are examined, and insights are offered in relation to strengthening existing nuclear-weapon-free zones globally and establishing new zones, where they do not exist, including in the Middle East. These insights may serve as a contribution to the comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, as referred to in operative paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution [79/241](#).

Progress and achievements

The Conference has developed a robust, sustainable, consensus-based and credible process that has delivered incremental, steady, systematic and meaningful progress towards the drafting of a legally binding instrument establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Since 2019, the Conference has convened five annual sessions and established an intersessional working committee that meets regularly to advance preparatory substantive discussions.

The Conference has explored numerous key technical and substantive dimensions of the establishment of such a zone, including:

- Core obligations related to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons
- Definitions
- Verification mechanisms and considerations
- Peaceful uses and technical cooperation
- Consultation, clarification, cooperation mechanisms and dispute settlement arrangements
- Negative security assurances

The Conference has assembled an index of thematic topics to be addressed in future sessions, providing a road map for continued systematic and predictable progress.

Features and perspectives

The Middle East zone has a number of characteristics that distinguish it from existing nuclear-weapon-free zones:

(a) **Comprehensive scope.** Unlike in existing zones, where the focus is on nuclear weapons alone, the scope of the Middle East zone encompasses all weapons of mass destruction (namely, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons) and verification mechanisms;

(b) **Existing capabilities.** The non-accession of a single member of the Conference (Israel) to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or any other instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, as well as an opacity regarding its existing capabilities, constitutes an obstacle and a clear threat to regional

and international security and stability, requiring prioritized attention while maintaining a comprehensive approach to chemical and biological weapons;

(c) **Complex regional dynamics.** The zone continues to face cascading threats, risks and challenges that are compounded by geopolitical complexities;

(d) **Contractual imbalance.** There exists an imbalance vis-à-vis the Non-Proliferation Treaty and instruments on other weapons of mass destruction in the region. Universal adherence to these instruments, namely, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, is essential for establishing an effective zone in the Middle East.

Key principles and insights

Through its deliberations, the Conference has developed several key principles and insights that may prove useful with respect to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones elsewhere:

(a) **Verification approaches.** The Conference has discussed approaches to verification, including relying on existing international verification regimes to enhance confidence and transparency. Such mechanisms must be non-discriminatory, balanced and applied equally to all members of the Conference in the region;

(b) **Peaceful settlement of disputes.** The Conference has explored multi-tiered approaches to consultation, clarification, cooperation and the settlement of disputes, drawing from existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and relevant treaties, while adapting them to the regional realities of the Middle East;

(c) **Negative security assurances.** The Conference has emphasized the importance of legally binding, non-discriminatory, unconditional and irrevocable negative security assurances from nuclear-weapon States as an essential component of any nuclear-weapon-free zone through an additional protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and without reservations or interpretative declarations that run counter to the purposes and principles of the Treaty;

(d) **Respect for the inalienable right to peaceful uses.** The Conference has affirmed that the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction must not impede, through any restrictions, the inalienable right of members of the Conference to develop, research, produce and use nuclear, chemical and biological materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. The Conference has recognized the illegality of imposing unilateral coercive measures, which have a negative impact on members of the Conference.

Challenges and lessons learned

The Conference has encountered and addressed several challenges from which valuable lessons can be drawn:

(a) **Achieving universal participation.** Despite continuous efforts to secure universal regional participation, Israel has not yet participated in the work of the Conference. The Conference recognizes that meaningful progress towards the establishment of the zone cannot be fully achieved without universal regional participation with a view to drafting a legal instrument representing the free will of the region. Nevertheless, the Conference has continued to make progress, while recognizing that the absence of any observer State would obstruct the work of the Conference;

(b) **Sequencing obligations.** There is recognition that all members of the Conference in the region must accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and subject their nuclear facilities to the full-scope safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency with no exceptions;

(c) **Building regional capacity.** The Conference has recognized the need to build regional implementation capacity while also leveraging existing international mechanisms;

(d) **Balancing progress and inclusivity.** The Conference has balanced making concrete and incremental progress against maintaining an inclusive approach so that all members of the Conference join and continue to participate in the process.

Future directions and insights

Based on the work of the Conference, the following insights are offered in relation to strengthening existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and establishing new ones:

(a) **Enhanced inter-zonal cooperation.** Increased cooperation and information-sharing among existing nuclear-weapon-free zones can strengthen such zones and support the establishment of new ones;

(b) **Meaningful engagement with nuclear-weapon States.** There must be early and sustained engagement with nuclear-weapon States on protocols, including negative security assurances, pending the total elimination of all nuclear weapons;

(c) **Regional ownership.** Successful nuclear-weapon-free zones require strong regional ownership and leadership, with the international community playing a supportive but non-prescriptive role. The three co-sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference have particular responsibilities in this regard, and consequently their participation at the Conference, as well as that of the two other nuclear-weapon States, is essential;

(d) **Progressive approach.** A step-by-step approach that addresses technical issues while maintaining focus on the ultimate political objective has proved effective;

(e) **Sustained diplomatic engagement.** Continued dialogue, including after the establishment of the future zone and throughout its implementation, is essential for long-term success;

(f) **Legal and political foundation.** The Conference affirms the continued validity of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference; along with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council, in particular Council resolutions [487 \(1981\)](#) and [687 \(1991\)](#), it constitutes the foundation for the establishment of the future zone.

The Conference reaffirms its commitment to making significant contributions to international peace and security through its expertise and dedication, actively advancing the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as a crucial component of the regional and global security architecture. Through its deliberative process, consistent and inclusive dialogue has yielded meaningful progress on complex security challenges.

While acknowledging that the path forward entails universal regional participation and continued diplomatic engagement, the Conference affirms its commitment to building on the foundation of relevant international agreements and United Nations resolutions. As this work progresses, it not only serves regional security interests but also strengthens the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones

to the goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. The Conference stands ready to continue sharing its experience with other regional and international initiatives with similar objectives.

Panama

[Original: Spanish]
[20 March 2025]

The commitment of Panama to world peace is reflected in its participation in international organizations dedicated to nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons at the regional and international levels. It always votes in favour of prohibiting weapons of mass destruction or, in this case, nuclear weapons.

In addition, it has signed various international treaties and agreements, such as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In light of the foregoing, Panama, like the entire Latin American and Caribbean region, is a nuclear-weapon-free zone because it does not possess, produce or stockpile these weapons of mass destruction.

Thailand

[Original: English]
[29 May 2025]

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions signifies regional efforts, constituting a significant contribution to global endeavours to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. These zones not only reinforce disarmament and non-proliferation norms but also serve as important confidence-building measures that enhance regional and international security. Further efforts should be made to provide legally binding negative security assurances to the States Parties of such zones.

As the depositary State of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, Thailand has been at the forefront of supporting the objectives of the Treaty and promoting regional peace and stability since its entry into force in 1997.

Under the Treaty, States Parties assume comprehensive obligations, including not to develop, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over nuclear weapons; station or transport nuclear weapons by any means; or test or use nuclear weapons within the zone.

The aspirations underpinning the Treaty are further reflected in the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in which the preservation of South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and zone free of other weapons of mass destruction is recognized as one of the purposes of ASEAN. The Treaty serves to support and strengthen the core pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which are nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Treaty remains a cornerstone of the security architecture of ASEAN and continues to serve as a key aspect of the region's contribution to global disarmament efforts, particularly in an increasingly complex and evolving security landscape. To ensure the full implementation of the goals and objectives of the Treaty, ASEAN

adopted the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (2023–2027) and reaffirms its commitment to continuously engage with the nuclear-weapon States and intensify the efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues related to the Protocol to the Treaty.

Thailand continues to support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions, including in the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Such zones can play a pivotal role in enhancing the security of Member States and serve as confidence-building measures within their respective regions and at the global level.

Thailand also supports coordination among the nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia, as well as the synergy between nuclear-weapon-free zones and other existing disarmament frameworks, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to further advance the goal of general and complete disarmament. As an informal facilitator, together with Ireland, on the issue of “complementarity” under the framework of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Thailand has actively contributed to advancing this objective. At the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held from 28 April to 9 May 2025, Thailand hosted a side event on the complementary role of regional efforts with respect to international disarmament and the non-proliferation regime, at which the complementarity between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Non-Proliferation Treaty was examined, among other topics.

Turkmenistan

[Original: English]
[17 February 2025]

Background

As a signatory to, and active participant in, the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, Turkmenistan reaffirms its commitment to the principles of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of global and regional peace and security. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has enabled significant progress in relation to reinforcing international security by preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensuring peaceful cooperation among nations.

Recognizing the importance of General Assembly resolution [79/241](#), in which the Assembly called for a comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, Turkmenistan underscores the necessity of strengthening existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, promoting collaboration among them and exploring the creation of new zones, including in regions marked by geopolitical tension.

Contributions and recommendations

Strengthening cooperation among existing nuclear-weapon-free zones

Turkmenistan emphasizes the need for increased coordination and information-sharing among existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including through interregional forums and mechanisms.

The signing of the memorandum of understanding between the States Parties to the Semipalatinsk Treaty and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and the signing of the memorandum of cooperation

with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy are vital steps towards greater synergy between nuclear-weapon-free zones. Turkmenistan encourages the institutionalization of such cooperation through regular joint meetings, capacity-building initiatives and policy harmonization.

Enhancing the legal and political framework of nuclear-weapon-free zones

Turkmenistan calls upon nuclear-weapon States that have not signed or ratified the relevant protocols to treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones to do so promptly, thereby providing legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Turkmenistan urges the Secretary-General to facilitate discussions regarding mechanisms to ensure stronger compliance with, and enforcement of, treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones, in particular in the event of violations.

Promoting the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones

In accordance with the principles outlined in the 1999 report of the Disarmament Commission, Turkmenistan supports the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones based on voluntary agreements among States in the respective regions.

Addressing emerging challenges in nuclear disarmament

Turkmenistan acknowledges the risks associated with new nuclear technologies, including the potential for proliferation through advanced uranium enrichment, plutonium reprocessing and military applications of artificial intelligence.

In the report, the impact of new geopolitical dynamics on nuclear-weapon-free zones should be considered and measures to reinforce these zones amid evolving security threats should be proposed.

Integrating nuclear-weapon-free zones into global disarmament efforts

The Office for Disarmament Affairs should play an active role in facilitating discussions between nuclear-weapon-free zones and nuclear-armed States within relevant United Nations disarmament forums.

The anniversary meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, held in Ashgabat in 2024 (see [A/79/698](#)), served to demonstrate the necessity of consolidating global disarmament efforts by leveraging the successes of nuclear-weapon-free zones in order to achieve the broader goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Conclusion

Turkmenistan reiterates its firm commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We urge the United Nations to incorporate these recommendations into the comprehensive study to be prepared under General Assembly resolution [79/241](#). Strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones, ensuring their legal effectiveness and expanding their reach to new regions will serve as a cornerstone for the advancement of international peace and security.

Turkmenistan stands ready to actively participate in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General and in discussions aimed at promoting the full implementation of treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones worldwide.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

[Original: English]

[30 May 2025]

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomes the opportunity to respond to General Assembly resolution 79/241 on a comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects.

The United Kingdom was pleased to support resolution 79/241 and fully agrees with the sentiments set out at the start of this resolution, where it is affirmed that the maintenance of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the establishment of new zones, including in the Middle East, promote global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute to the achievement of nuclear disarmament objectives.

The United Kingdom remains resolute in its support of such zones and has demonstrated that support by signing and ratifying all protocols to the treaties on such zones that are open for signature. It looks forward to continuing to engage with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the hopes of signing the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone at the earliest opportunity. The United Kingdom also fully supports the creation of new zones under the principles and guidelines adopted by the 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.

Views of the United Kingdom on issues that fall within the scope of the study

The United Kingdom believes that the following should all be useful elements to discuss as part of the scope of this study.

The study should include a review of how each of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones has been implemented in practice. The aim should be to understand how differences in treaty obligations, definitions and organizational matters affect the costs and benefits for the States members. Particular attention could be paid to the following elements:

- Obligations
- Geographical boundaries
- Regional oversight or verification mechanisms
- Transparency, consultation or other confidence-building mechanisms
- How member States understand the benefits they derive from membership of their zone.

The study should enable the identification of best practices and better enable the full, efficient and effective benefits to be realized for the States members of each zone. Furthermore, when best practices are identified, these can serve as a template for the essential elements for inclusion and the operating mechanisms for future zones in other regions. The experiences of Mongolia in these regards would also be most welcome.

This review should extend to the obligations assumed by States members and the implementation of the protocols to each of the treaties establishing the zones, and help readers to better understand how States that have signed or ratified these protocols can better implement their obligations. This should include assurances against the use of nuclear weapons, to the benefit of the States members in compliance with their obligations within each zone.

The study should also contain a summary of lessons learned from the nuclear-weapon-free zones and how these can be applied in order to reach and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon-free zones have established important trust and confidence-building measures between States in order to implement and sustain non-proliferation and disarmament. They have also shown how a combination of legal, political, technical and normative measures can work in tandem to promote disarmament, reduce tensions and build lasting security benefits for their members. Utilizing this study to better understand the interplay between these mechanisms, and how they can be implemented to build and sustain future regional, interregional and global disarmament arrangements, would be of significant importance, particularly in these times of increasing global tensions.

The study should also be drafted so as to fulfil the requirements of resolution [79/241](#) and make recommendations with respect to strengthening existing zones and the possible establishment of new zones. Any recommendation to establish new zones should be generic and not based on any specific region, such that the States of those regions can freely decide for themselves how best to implement them in the light of the specific needs of their region. Furthermore, based on the lessons learned from existing zones, the study should contain recommendations with respect to facilitating the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.

III. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]
[30 May 2025]

The European Union and its member States acknowledge the critical importance of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones for peace and security. The Treaty of Tlatelolco,¹ the Treaty of Rarotonga,² the Treaty of Bangkok,³ the Treaty of Pelindaba⁴ and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, as well as other similar instruments, play a critical role in maintaining international peace and security.

Existing – and the consideration of additional – nuclear-weapon-free zones help to strengthen the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and consolidate international efforts towards peace and security and achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. They significantly contribute to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The European Union recognizes that negative security assurances strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and that treaty-based security assurances are available to nuclear-weapon-free zones, comprising more than 100 United Nations Member States. However, the breach of given negative security assurances has a significant negative impact on global security and undermines the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones can also contribute significantly to confidence-building and risk reduction measures, strengthening trust and dialogue between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

The European Union encourages nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones drawn up following the requisite consultations. We call on all of them to abide by existing

¹ Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

² South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

³ Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

⁴ African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

security assurances they have granted to non-nuclear-weapon States respecting their non-proliferation obligations – security assurances noted in relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 984 (1995), and recalled in Council resolutions 1887 (2009) and 2310 (2016).

We encourage those States in existing nuclear-weapon-free zones that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

The European Union reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East.⁵ We consider the resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons valid until its goals and objectives are achieved, and strongly support the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on the Middle East. We note the five sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction and their outcomes. The European Union recalls that, as stated in the action plan adopted by the 2010 Review Conference, such zones can only be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned. We urge all stakeholders, and especially the States of the region, to engage in meaningful consultations in order to build an inclusive and consensus-based process towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

The European Union recalls the relevance and importance of the Outer Space Treaty,⁶ and in particular its article IV prohibiting the placement in orbit around the Earth of any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, the installation of such weapons on celestial bodies, and the stationing of such weapons in outer space in any other manner. The European Union underlines the importance of the universalization of this Treaty, as well as the full implementation of its provisions.

IV. Reply received from the United Nations system

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

[Original: English]
[30 May 2025]

Executive summary

Nuclear-weapon-free zones play a crucial role in reinforcing non-proliferation and disarmament by ensuring the absence of nuclear weapons in designated regions. Beyond prohibiting nuclear arms, such zones foster trust among regional States, enhance security and promote cooperation on peaceful nuclear technology, contributing to broader international stability. Their integration with global non-proliferation frameworks strengthens compliance with bans on nuclear weapons

⁵ To advance its commitment to establishing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, the European Union continues to back a project launched in 2019, currently ongoing under Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1306 of 26 June 2023 in support of a project on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East (ME WMDFZ) in an evolving regional security environment, and implemented by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

⁶ Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

and testing. In addition, nuclear-weapon-free zones serve as instruments for nuclear risk reduction, limiting the potential for regional arms races and encouraging confidence-building measures.

Given the escalating geopolitical tensions and rising nuclear rhetoric, strengthening established nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as pursuing the creation of new ones, has become increasingly important for preventing conflict spillovers, mitigating global security risks and advancing disarmament. Reinforcing existing nuclear-weapon-free zones entails addressing several issues. One issue is the incomplete ratification of protocols to treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones. While all five recognized nuclear-weapon States – China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States – have ratified certain negative security assurance protocols, other protocols remain unratified or unsigned. Moreover, some States have expressed reservations or issued interpretive statements that weaken their effectiveness. A second issue is that cooperation between existing zones has been limited. Although the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia provides a potential platform for coordination, it has been held inconsistently, limiting opportunities for structured engagement. A third issue is resource constraints, which affect the ability of the secretariats of nuclear-weapon-free zones to fully implement treaty obligations and opportunities. A fourth issue is that current global geopolitical tensions could further erode the credibility and effectiveness of these zones, particularly in regions experiencing active conflict, or there could be shifts in nuclear policies among major powers.

In terms of the creation of new zones, the Middle East continues to be a region of concern regarding the possession and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Research by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and others illustrates how those undertaking efforts to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction face significant challenges, including a lack of adherence to treaties on weapons of mass destruction, violations of existing non-proliferation commitments, differing views on the objectives and sequencing of the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and pervasive mistrust within the region. This mistrust is compounded by escalating rhetoric within the region about the use and acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and the absence of a key regional State from the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Recommendations to enhance the established nuclear-weapon-free zones include fostering dialogue within and among States members of nuclear-weapon-free zones and nuclear-weapon States in order to ensure full participation, as well as full ratification of outstanding protocols and the addressing of reservations and ambiguities in the commitments of nuclear-weapon States. Enhancing cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones through knowledge-sharing and regular meetings of the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia would further support coordination efforts. In addition, expanding financial and institutional support for the secretariats and bodies of such zones would enable more effective treaty implementation. Technical cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones could also improve verification mechanisms and compliance monitoring. Engaging civil society in these processes would help to enhance the effectiveness of these regimes.

Furthermore, since most nuclear-weapon-free zones were established after the initial comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, published in 1976, there is a rich set of lessons and best practices that should be captured in order to build knowledge in relation to the establishment and implementation of such zones. As such, the forthcoming comprehensive study or a

commissioned paper should serve to document the history of negotiations regarding each zone and details of the conditions, procedures, processes, format and substantive aspects of each treaty. The evolutionary nature of nuclear-weapon-free zones should also be acknowledged, as should the fact that more recent zones build upon previous obligations, contributing to and advancing the non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, the group of experts should consider revisiting the established guidelines and principles for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, to assess whether changes are needed to reflect the current global geopolitical and security landscapes, and reaffirm those that remain relevant.

Through its research on the zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, UNIDIR has identified lessons learned from past experiences relevant to the Middle East, including on verifying disarmament and implementing nuclear safeguards, as well as the role of extraregional States in other nuclear-weapon-free zones in promoting regional security, non-proliferation and disarmament. Recommendations include sustaining inclusive dialogue, holding national and subregional talks with diverse stakeholders and promoting the zone's security value through threat reduction, confidence-building measures and regional cooperation. Expert and scientific engagement would enhance institutional expertise and promote cooperative measures in relation to peaceful applications within the nuclear, chemical and biological domains.

Establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is a long-term endeavour requiring sustained commitment and incremental progress. Addressing persistent challenges and maintaining the momentum of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which received its mandate from the General Assembly, is crucial. Conference members should uphold inclusivity, constructiveness and consensus, fostering dialogue such that the concerns and legitimate interests of all States of the region are addressed equally; they should also identify and promote full participation. Transparency regarding the process would be of great value to the Conference, as it would increase confidence and open opportunities for States, civil society and the international community to contribute to the process in their various roles. Technical expertise from regional and international organizations, as well as established nuclear-weapon-free zones, would help to address outstanding issues.

Direct dialogue among the States of the Middle East is essential to bridging gaps and advancing negotiations. Revitalizing regional diplomacy, engaging all States on challenges and reinforcing incentives for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East require intensified efforts. States should avoid rhetoric and threats related to the development or use of weapons of mass destruction, instead promoting trust through transparency, ratification, adherence and compliance with relevant treaties.

V. Replies received from international and regional organizations

Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

[Original: English]
[30 May 2025]

Executive summary

The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean attaches the utmost importance to the new comprehensive study of the

question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, as it is an initiative conceived and promoted by its member States.

Building upon the legacy of the 1975 United Nations study, a historic milestone that defined “nuclear-weapon-free zone”, the new study should adopt a broader and inclusive approach. It must contribute to reinforcing the legal and institutional structures of the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as Mongolia’s status. It should also highlight their complementarity with key instruments of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Since its establishment, the Agency has faced a range of political, legal and institutional challenges. These experiences provide valuable lessons and best practices for the new comprehensive study.¹

Principles and objectives of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

The preamble to the Treaty of Tlatelolco outlines the principles and objectives of establishing militarily denuclearized zones. It reflects the region’s conviction that nuclear weapons would make Latin America and the Caribbean the target of attacks, trigger arms races and divert resources. It reinforces the commitment to full and equitable access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It also stresses the balance of responsibilities between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

Universality

The path to universality of the Treaty of Tlatelolco faced legal and political challenges for several decades. Article 29 provided a flexible entry-into-force mechanism, allowing States to waive conditions via express declaration. Milestones such as the establishment of the Agency, the ratification of Additional Protocol II by nuclear-weapon States and key amendments in the 1990s, strengthened the control system, expanded membership and reflected political realities.

The control system’s flexibility and innovation remain among the Treaty’s greatest strengths. The Agency, as its legal and political body, oversees compliance through biannual declarations, while technical verification is carried out via International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The system has evolved to integrate other verification mechanisms like the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, enhancing transparency and confidence. To address administrative challenges stemming from complex national bureaucracies, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean introduced a voluntary, standardized format in 2018, reducing burdens and improving article 14 compliance, an innovation that strengthens the verification regime and offers a replicable model for other nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Negative security assurances

The Agency considers negative security assurances essential in the establishment and strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones. While all five nuclear-weapon States are Parties to Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, France, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia have issued interpretative declarations questioning key provisions. These include refusals to recognize the zone of application or the attachment of conditions tied to acts of

¹ Some best practices are included in the full version of the report.

aggression involving third countries. Although the Treaty prohibits reservations under Additional Protocol II, some declarations act as de facto reservations, undermining the Treaty's security guarantees.

The Agency has pursued a strategy grounded in legal expertise and diplomacy. The Secretary-General, with the support of the Agency's States members, prepared memorandums recommending adjustments to these declarations, drawing from International Law Commission guidelines. This effort, rooted in legal analysis and direct dialogue, seeks to reconcile differences and restore the strength of the Treaty's core provisions. The Agency's model of engagement can serve other nuclear-weapon-free zones facing similar issues, promoting legal clarity, dialogue and cooperation.

Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco

The Agency pursues institutional improvements to ensure the Treaty's effective implementation and adaptability. Increased engagement in international forums, such as the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and strengthened cooperation with other nuclear-weapon-free zones have reinforced the Treaty regime and the Agency's role in global disarmament. In recent years, institutional renewal has accelerated with improvements in internal procedures, digital modernization and the formalization of the Secretary-General election process, all contributing to enhanced governance and transparency.

Other nuclear-weapon-free zones

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are not isolated initiatives; they are an essential component of the global security architecture. The Agency supports all international efforts to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East. To strengthen ties, the Agency has established direct contact and deepened cooperation with other nuclear-weapon-free zones by signing memorandums of understanding with their respective organizations and countries. Furthermore, Brazil and Mexico, on behalf of States members of the Agency, submitted a resolution to the General Assembly calling for a new comprehensive study, which was adopted with wide support.²

Disarmament and non-proliferation education

The Agency has taken a leading role in disarmament and non-proliferation education, focusing on training diplomats and international security experts while expanding access through partnerships with civil society and academic institutions. Through seminars, panels and public events, it has created a replicable educational model that supports the consolidation of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Recommendations

Institutional and procedural strengthening

The Office for Disarmament Affairs and IAEA could redouble efforts to support regional efforts on specialized training and capacity-building. Dedicated consultants, a support fund for technical assistance, and peer-to-peer exchanges could be promoted for enhancing interregional cooperation. The United Nations Disarmament Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services Programme should be opened for officials from the bodies or entities coordinating treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

² General Assembly resolution 79/241.

Legal and political strengthening

Formal and informal dialogue mechanisms should be established with nuclear-weapon States to reinforce respect for nuclear-weapon-free zones. Regional legal studies are needed to address interpretative challenges, with support from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, civil society and academia. Track 1.5 or track 2 dialogues and international legal tools can help to clarify obligations. Finally, States Parties should update institutional frameworks, advance strategic plans and invest in training and awareness, ensuring the continued effectiveness and functionality of the zones.

Conclusion

The diversity of approaches can make the study a key milestone for strengthening existing zones and advancing new ones. However, the effectiveness of treaties and organizations depends on Member States' commitment; their vitality reflects the level of engagement and value attributed by them.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations

[Original: English]

[30 May 2025]

Executive summary*Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone*

The Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, also known as the Treaty of Bangkok, was signed on 15 December 1995 by the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It entered into force on 27 March 1997 and was registered with the United Nations on 27 June 1997. Its aspirations are reflected in the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, in which preserving South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is defined as one of the purposes of the Association. This objective remains central to maintaining regional peace, stability and security.

The Treaty of Bangkok established the third nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. States Parties assume a number of obligations, including commitments not to develop, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over nuclear weapons; station or transport nuclear weapons by any means; or test or use nuclear weapons within the zone. Under the Treaty, they are also prohibited from discharging radioactive materials or waste at sea, into the atmosphere, or on land within the region, and forbidden from permitting other States to conduct such acts. More broadly, the purpose of the Treaty is to strengthen global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, supporting the core principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which are nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Since 1995, States members of ASEAN have pursued consultations with the five nuclear-weapon States – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – to secure their support for, and recognition of, the Treaty of Bangkok through the signing and ratification of the Protocol thereto. These efforts reflect the commitment of ASEAN to maintaining South-East Asia as a region free of nuclear weapons and contributing to global disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

The nuclear-weapon-free zone established by the Treaty of Bangkok remains the only such zone with a protocol that has yet to be signed and ratified by the nuclear-weapon States, owing to issues related to declarations and reservations submitted by France, Russia and the United Kingdom.

The States members of ASEAN have continued to deliberate on ways to move forward, including through sustained engagement with the nuclear-weapon States in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty of Bangkok. ASEAN previously worked towards collective signature and ratification by all five nuclear-weapon States without reservations. However, at the fifty-sixth ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held in July 2023, ASEAN agreed to explore the possibility of allowing individual nuclear-weapon States that were willing to sign the Protocol to the Treaty without reservations, and to provide prior formal assurance of this commitment in writing, to proceed with the signing. States members also agreed to continuously engage with all nuclear-weapon States, including those with reservations, and to intensify the efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty. This position has been consistently reaffirmed in the various joint communiqués of ASEAN foreign ministers, including those issued at the fifty-seventh ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held in July 2024.

The Association remains committed to maintaining South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the effective implementation of the Treaty of Bangkok. To achieve this goal, the Commission for the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone adopted the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which has been renewed every five years since 2013, with the current iteration covering the period 2023–2027.

All States members of ASEAN are Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. ASEAN has further reinforced its commitment to nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation by acceding to key international treaties, such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. These efforts support global disarmament and promote the peaceful, safe and secure use of nuclear energy.

The regional frameworks of ASEAN play a pivotal role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology. The ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy, established in 2012, facilitates the exchange of information, best practices and expertise among national regulatory bodies, and strengthens cooperation on nuclear safety, security and safeguards. In parallel, the ASEAN Nuclear Energy Cooperation Sub-Sector Network fosters regional cooperation in civilian nuclear energy, with a focus on capacity-building and upholding the principles of safety, security and safeguards.

The Association also values cooperation with international organizations and partners in support of global disarmament and non-proliferation. A significant milestone was the signing of an agreement on practical arrangements with the International Atomic Energy Agency on 16 September 2019, which has been renewed until 2029. These arrangements have led to several projects on non-nuclear power applications and capacity-building.

To raise the profile of the Treaty of Bangkok at multilateral forums, ASEAN has presented a biennial resolution on the Treaty at meetings of the First Committee since 2007. The most recent of these resolutions was adopted at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, in 2023. ASEAN also continues to collaborate and engage in regular dialogue with other nuclear-weapon-free zones, which reinforces its commitment to strengthening global coordination among such zones.

League of Arab States

[Original: Arabic]
[7 May 2025]

The League of Arab States (LAS) seeks to draw attention in its report to the initiative that the Arab States launched in 1974 to rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, as well as to the efforts that have been made in that regard within the framework of LAS over more than five decades and the mechanism that the League has used to overcome the challenges and obstacles faced by the Arab States in pursuit of that goal, which they consider to be vital to strengthening security in the Middle East, with a particular emphasis 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. The report includes a frank assessment of the progress made towards the implementation of this Arab strategic aim. Unfortunately, the progress that has been made over more than five decades pales when compared with the many failures that have occurred along the way.

The report covers the period from 2010 to 2015, beginning with the inclusion in the Final Document of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of a call for practical steps towards the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, including the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East (the 2012 conference) to be attended by all the States of the region, namely, the Arab States, Iran and Israel; the appointment of a facilitator for the conference; and the designation of the three sponsors of the 1995 resolution as its organizers. The Arab States demonstrated wisdom and responded with flexibility when the United States unilaterally decided to postpone the convening of the conference. They agreed to the designation of a new date for the conference, taking into account the three criteria set out in Council of the League resolution 7580 of 13 January 2013. In accordance with that resolution, the Arab States and LAS participated in five rounds of informal consultations in Switzerland (three rounds in Glion and two rounds in Geneva) from October 2013 to June 2014. Israel demonstrated stubbornness throughout the consultations, and tried to change the theme and purpose of the conference, under pretext that it should cover all regional security issues. When the 2015 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was convened, Britain and the United States, the organizers of the 2012 conference, along with Canada, objected to the draft of the Final Document of the Review Conference, on the grounds that the section on the Middle East was not acceptable, despite there being significant support for the Arab position, which was set out in the relevant working paper ([NPT/CONF.2015/WP.33](#)). Those countries blatantly undermined the credibility of the Treaty and demonstrated indifference to the resulting void in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including, in particular, with regard to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

In addition, the report covers the efforts of the League over more than five decades to achieve the goal of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in particular given that Israel is in possession, unilaterally, of nuclear capabilities that are not subject to any inspection or verification regime, thereby undermining regional security, in particular, and international security, in general. In 2016, the Secretary-General of LAS established the Committee of the Wise on Arms Control and Non-Proliferation and called upon it to evaluate Arab nuclear policies and develop recommendations in that regard on the basis of its vision and conclusions. In March 2018, the Council of the League at the ministerial level adopted a resolution calling for action within the framework of the

General Assembly, which culminated in the adoption by the Assembly of its decision 73/546 on 22 December 2018. In that decision, which was adopted with the support of 88 States, the Assembly entrusted to the Secretary-General the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, to which all States of the Middle East would be invited, with a view to elaborating a legally binding instrument that is freely arrived at and that takes as its principal terms of reference the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Since 2019, the conference has held five sessions in which all the Arab States and Iran participated, while Israel has continued not to participate.

In the conclusion to the report, LAS presents its vision for ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and set out the interconnected international and regional developments in that regard. The establishment of such a zone would consolidate the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regimes at the regional and global levels, including efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in outer space and in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. In that connection, LAS believes that all international parties must fulfil their responsibilities, stop applying double standards with regard to the nuclear weapons of Israel and apply every form of pressure on Israel, because it is the only party in the Middle East that has not acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, refuses to subject all of its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency and implement the relevant international resolutions, impedes the universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and obstructs any serious preliminary negotiations on ridding the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction.

VI. Replies received from disarmament-related institutes and non-governmental organizations

Arms Control Association

[Original: English]
[23 May 2025]

Nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are established by virtue of treaties accompanied by protocols that provide for legally binding negative security assurances, are effective regional approaches to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Due to current regional and global political conditions, the likelihood that additional nuclear-weapon-free zones will be established is low. Nevertheless, the shared goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are supported by renewed commitment and appropriate adjustments to existing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

To this end, the Arms Control Association proposes the following:

- (a) States that are within the geographical limits of a nuclear-weapon-free zone but are not Party to the relevant treaty should ratify that treaty without delay;
- (b) All States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and States in South-East Asia that are not party to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone should call for and facilitate the resumption of negotiations with nuclear-weapon States on outstanding issues relating to the Protocol to the Treaty;
- (c) States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should implement all commitments under their respective treaty obligations;

(d) States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should deepen cross-regional discussions on the purpose and objectives, universalization and effective implementation of the treaties, and should also deepen effective cooperation in multilateral forums, including by producing joint statements and working papers;

(e) States in nuclear-weapon-free zones should seek to increase cooperation with nuclear-weapon States and States in other nuclear-weapon-free zones to, among other purposes, resolve or reach understandings regarding issues related to sovereignty, territorial disputes and decolonization;

(f) Nuclear-weapon States should ratify all their respective legally binding commitments under the protocols to existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. In particular, the United States, the last nuclear-weapon State holdout, should be called upon to ratify the protocols to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty to formally bring into effect the associated negative nuclear security assurances;

(g) States Parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty should engage at the highest levels with the United States Senate, the State Department and the White House to bring attention to the value of prompt ratification of these nuclear-weapon-free zone protocols;

(h) States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons since nuclear-weapon-free zone commitments are compatible with and supportive of each of the aforementioned treaties.

(i) States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should take joint efforts to track and reduce civilian stocks of fissile materials and improve safeguards and physical protections for their nuclear facilities and materials by utilizing existing frameworks such as those outlined in International Atomic Energy Agency documents INFCIRC/549, INFCIRC/912 and INFCIRC/225, and the 1979 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 amendment.

Blue Banner

[Original: English]
[19 May 2025]

Blue Banner wholeheartedly supports General Assembly resolution [79/241](#) as timely, since the first comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects was undertaken more than four decades ago. Much has changed since then in international relations and technology development. Therefore, the new study would be useful in strengthening the current five zones, as well as establishing second-generation zones in troubled regions or where the interests of nuclear-weapon States are involved.

In that resolution, the General Assembly specifically mentioned the scope of the study, which needs to be broadened to make the nuclear-weapon-free zone regime inclusive by reviewing the regime's definition and its very concept. The reason is that establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones "on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned" leaves out at least two dozen States, if not more, that, due to their geographical location or for credible political or legal reasons, cannot form part of the current regime. This innovative approach would complement only the current traditional group-State zones.

Cumulatively, in their number and territory or space that they cover, these individual States far exceed some current zones. Inclusivity would prevent discrimination among non-nuclear-weapon States and violation of the principle of sovereign equality of States and the inherent right to self-defence under the Charter of the United Nations. It would also proscribe the creation of blind spots and grey areas, the Achilles heel of the nuclear-weapon-free zone and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons regimes.

Nearly 70 per cent of the Earth's surface is covered by seas and oceans, where the arms race is increasing alarmingly. Many of the individual States are small island States, including in the vast Pacific region. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, these States are in fact large ocean States with enormous exclusive economic zones with rich living and non-living resources. Some of them are located on or near strategic trade and military sea lanes. Hence, today the geopolitical and geoeconomic importance of such areas is on the rise. No wonder great power rivalry in this area is increasing. However, this rivalry can be turned into constructive cooperation that benefits all States if individual States are brought under the strengthened nuclear-weapon-free zone umbrella and expand horizontally the area of the regime. This would also reduce the risk of conflicts and frictions by proxy conflicts, as *lupus non mordet lupum* ("a wolf does not bite a wolf").

The content of such individual cases can be agreed upon by these States through the adoption of national declarations or legislation and the provision by the nuclear-weapon States of appropriate assurances.

British American Security Information Council

[Original: English]

[22 May 2025]

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are widely recognized as a key component of the international disarmament architecture. They play an indispensable role in strengthening peace and security, and are especially important in ensuring the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. Such zones serve as, and complement other, measures for non-proliferation, nuclear risk reduction and the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, offering a concrete step towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be led by relevant regional States and achieved by consensus, in consultation with nuclear-weapon States recognized under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other relevant States external to the region, and should include consideration of the role of nuclear-armed States not Party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones express the right of States, as reaffirmed in article VII of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to ensure that their regions remain free of nuclear weapons. Such zones play an increasingly vital role, as the Treaty faces concerns regarding its credibility and effectiveness.

As such, efforts should be made to strengthen existing, and establish new, nuclear-weapon-free zones, including through enhanced coordination between existing zones as a capacity-building measure. Nuclear-weapon States should ratify the relevant protocols relating to established nuclear-weapon-free zones, and States Members of the United Nations should consider whether and how these protocols might be extended to cover all nuclear-armed States, including those not Party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Civil society and observer organizations play an important role in assisting and advising on the establishment and maintenance of nuclear-weapon-free zones. They

should therefore be consulted and encouraged to continue playing an active role in this regard, including in the Middle East, as recognized by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is an integral objective of the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinite extension package. At the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, States Parties extended this to include all weapons of mass destruction. Thus, tangible progress towards a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is imperative to support the credibility and effectiveness of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and ensure wider peace and security.

Rising geopolitical tensions, regional instability, and conflicts underscore the importance of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Since full participation in this process is crucial to ensuring its effectiveness, non-participating stakeholders should actively engage in the process by attending the sixth session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction as a confidence-building measure. States Members of the United Nations and civil society should support the Conference and its efforts to maintain strong political commitment to establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Global Research Institute at William and Mary

[Original: English]

[13 May 2025]

Since the 1950s, nuclear-weapon-free zones have sought to address some of the most pressing dangers of the nuclear arms race, such as proliferation, the threat of nuclear use, and environmental degradation. States understood that, to be most effective, such zones need to adapt and grow within regions and across the world.

General Assembly resolution [79/241](#), in which the Assembly called for the first United Nations comprehensive study of nuclear-weapon-free zones in 50 years, is a step in that direction. Like its predecessor (resolution [3261 \(XXIX\)](#)), resolution [79/241](#) finds that nuclear-weapon-free zones “could be strengthened” by a new study. To meet its potential, the study must explore key issues across the past, present and future of such zones.

Analysing the history of nuclear-weapon-free zones will be important. The study should seek to elucidate why some proposals for such zones succeeded, why many failed and the outstanding issues that remain for each, all with an eye to bolstering the ones that exist and helping seed new ones around the world. This analysis will require an honest assessment, based on the best available evidence, of the factors that have determined the fate of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The study should focus on comprehensive membership for existing nuclear-weapon-free zones. Many such zones were designed to come into effect with only partial membership so that holdout States would not delay others. Nevertheless, States always recognized that nuclear-weapon-free zones are strongest when all adhere. The study should help to clarify the factors that prevent eligible States – both regional and nuclear-weapon States – from joining existing pacts. Relatedly, it should highlight the enforcement record for nuclear-weapon-free zones and where any improvements might be made.

The study should also focus on ways to enhance cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones. It can highlight previous efforts to reach across regions and

identify the best practices of such zones that could be adopted by others. Since their inception, nuclear-weapon-free zones have built upon the ones that came before them, and the early ones should not miss out on the latest innovations.

Finally, the study can help nuclear-weapon-free zones to look over the horizon. Since their inception, such zones have helped to shape how the global nuclear order deals with emerging technologies and their control regimes. That opportunity persists today. For example, the study might explore the meaning of artificial intelligence for nuclear-weapon-free zones and nuclear non-proliferation efforts more broadly. Overall, the study can help such zones to become more fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies

[Original: English]
[15 April 2025]

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are effective regional approaches to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, legally fencing off entire regions of the world from nuclear weapons. In the 1975 United Nations comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, the quest by States to be totally free from the threat of nuclear weapons was recognized, and a nuclear-weapon-free zone was defined as an internationally binding agreement among a group of States effectively prohibiting the development, manufacturing, control, possession, testing or transporting of nuclear weapons within the zone, both by regional parties and nuclear-weapon States. Six nuclear-weapon-free zones currently exist,¹ covering territories of all countries in the southern hemisphere and key regions in the North.

Prospects for additional nuclear-weapon-free zones are slim since all areas of the world where nuclear weapons do not exist, or have been dismantled or withdrawn, are covered by existing zones. Other regions include existing nuclear-weapon possessors, and current political conditions in these regions present significant challenges to the establishment of such zones. However, with renewed commitment and appropriate adjustment, existing nuclear-weapon-free zones can continue to make major contributions to regional and global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament:

- (a) African States that have not yet done so should promptly ratify the Pelindaba Treaty;²
- (b) States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should implement all commitments under their respective treaty obligations;
- (c) Nuclear-weapon States that have not done so should ratify, and remain committed to all their respective legally binding commitments under, the protocols to existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties;

¹ Latin America and the Caribbean (1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean); South Pacific (1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty); South-East Asia (1995 Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone); Africa (1996 African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty); Mongolia (single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone recognized by the General Assembly in 2000); and Central Asia (2006 Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia).

² There are 43 States Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty, 51 signatory States and 1 African State that has not signed.

(d) States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should effectively cooperate to act as like-minded States in multilateral forums, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process;

(e) All Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty since they are already legally bound not to allow testing on their territories. Conversely, all Parties to the Treaty that are part of nuclear-weapon-free zones should ratify the relevant nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties;³

(f) All States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons since their nuclear-weapon-free zone commitments are in line with a global ban on nuclear weapons;⁴

(g) Parties to existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should take joint steps to improve the safeguards and physical protection to which their nuclear facilities and materials are subject, including by meeting the physical protection standards contained in International Atomic Energy Agency document INFCIRC/225 and the 1979 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 amendment;

(h) Where applicable, States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties should consider including a highly-enriched-uranium-free dimension in the implementation of their respective nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

Soka Gakkai International

[Original: English]

[12 May 2025]

Soka Gakkai International welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects. Strengthening, expanding and creating nuclear-weapon-free zones represents critical progress toward nuclear disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons, especially at a time of increasing nuclear threats and arms races.

Addressing the humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are excellent forums in which to highlight the devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons, including their use, testing and production, to ensure population safety. Existing zones should utilize their activities to discuss humanitarian consequences and explore the impact of such weapons relevant to their mission and the international community, as well as regional contexts and concerns. The 2023 Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons and Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, held in Kazakhstan, is an excellent example of such an activity. In addition, all States Members of the United Nations should acknowledge that the concerns regarding the humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons should encourage

³ Seven African States have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty but have not yet ratified the Pelindaba Treaty. One African State has not signed either of these treaties. One State Party to the Treaty of Rarotonga has not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

⁴ Thirteen States Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty and five States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco have signed but not yet ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Governments to establish or join nuclear-weapon-free zones, underscoring their tangible benefits for regional safety and stability.

Complementarity with other disarmament treaties

Our view is that nuclear-weapon-free zones complement and reinforce treaties such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in particular, strengthens the norms established by nuclear-weapon-free zones at the global level. Soka Gakkai International urges States in nuclear-weapon-free zones to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Comprehensive disarmament education

Soka Gakkai International believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones have the potential to strengthen and promote comprehensive disarmament education initiatives, coordinating closely with the Office for Disarmament Affairs and utilizing existing resources. This will reinforce commitments to nuclear disarmament and build resilience against potential regression. In addition, their significance should also be promoted to those countries outside of the current nuclear-weapon-free zones. We also encourage collaboration among existing zones to share resources and best practices (such as the disarmament education activities led by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean targeting students and diplomats), cooperating with civil society, academia and other stakeholders on developing and implementing such educational initiatives. Such educational efforts should also include, but not be limited to, promoting awareness of the complementarity between the zones and other treaties, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Conclusion

To challenge nuclear deterrence logic and prevent the use of nuclear weapons, existing nuclear-weapon-free zones must be reinforced, and new ones promoted, in regions such as Europe, the Middle East and North-East Asia. Strengthening disarmament education within nuclear-weapon-free zones will ensure that future generations remain committed to nuclear abolition. A sustained focus on education is key to securing a world free of nuclear weapons.
