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

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

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/75/150.



I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 74/30 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution 46/30. Taking into account the evolving situation in the region, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of those States on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to the report of the Secretary-General of 10 October 1990 (A/45/435) or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, at its seventy-fifth session, a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. On 23 January 2020, the Office for Disarmament Affairs sent a note verbale to all Member States drawing their attention to paragraphs 10 and 11 of resolution 74/30 and seeking their views on the matter. A revised note verbale was sent to Member States on 4 May 2020 extending the deadline for the submission of reports until 31 May 2020. Any views received after that deadline will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (www.un.org/disarmament) in the language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

3. Replies were received from the Governments of Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Lebanon, Mexico and Qatar and are reproduced in section III of the present report. A reply received from the European Union is reproduced in section IV, in accordance with the modalities set out in General Assembly resolution 65/276.

II. Observations

4. At the sixty-third regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, held in September 2019, members of the Group of Arab States reiterated a request to include an agenda item entitled “Israeli nuclear capabilities”. However, for the fourth consecutive year, the Group of Arab States opted not to introduce a resolution under that item and urged the international community, in particular the three co-sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,¹ to shoulder their responsibilities and support efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East at the Tenth Review Conference. Israel stated that the restraint by the Group of Arab States from submitting a draft resolution on the agenda item was a potentially encouraging step. However, Israel argued that the inclusion of the agenda item politicized the discussion at the general debate of the General Conference.

5. At the meetings of the First Committee during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, held in October 2019, Member States expressed their support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Many Member States welcomed and looked forward to the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, pursuant to Assembly decision 73/546, and called on all States concerned to participate in the Conference. Two Member States expressed the view that decision 73/546 had not been adopted by consensus and indicated therefore that they would not attend the Conference or recognize its outcomes.

¹ NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex.

6. Throughout the sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, many States parties reiterated that the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which contained a call for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, remained a high priority. A number of States parties stressed that they considered that the 1995 resolution remained valid until its goals and objectives had been achieved.

7. The first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction was held from 18 to 22 November 2019 and its outcomes marked an important step forward in the efforts by the States of the Middle East, with the support of the international community, to achieve their long-sought-after objective of establishing such a zone. The Secretary-General welcomed that positive development. The political declaration adopted at the first session of the Conference conveyed a clear message by the participating States to the international community of their political will, renewed commitment and determination to achieve that objective.

8. The Secretary-General believes that the process provides a valuable opportunity and a constructive framework for the States in the Middle East to engage in direct dialogue with each other and to build confidence. In that regard, he commended the constructive, transparent and inclusive approach adopted by the participating States with respect to the Conference and encouraged all States in the Middle East to participate in the process.

9. The Secretary-General hopes that the successful outcome of the first session of the Conference will have a positive impact on the Tenth Review Conference. The Secretary-General stresses that the realization of such a zone in the Middle East would be of significant value to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, and to regional and international peace and security.

10. In August 2019, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research launched a three-year project, with the support of the European Union, to examine the historical context of, perspectives on and prospects for a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The project is aimed at fostering inclusive dialogue and soliciting regional perspectives on such a zone, including by engaging relevant officials and experts in a series of workshops and fact-finding dialogues in countries of the Middle East.

11. The eventual achievement of a Middle East peace settlement would contribute to the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. In that connection, all parties concerned, inside and outside the region, should seek to create such conditions. The United Nations remains ready to provide any assistance in that regard. In that context, the continued lack of prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the growing impediments to the realization of the two-State solution are deeply concerning. Most recently, the stated intention of the Government of Israel to annex parts of the occupied West Bank adds to those concerns. If implemented, such steps would constitute a most serious violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. It would be devastating to the two-State solution and further threaten efforts to advance regional peace and broader efforts to maintain international peace and security. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and

Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.

12. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations have, since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General ([A/74/157 \(Part I\)](#)), continued their efforts towards the full implementation of Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#), on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. Continued engagement between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and OPCW is necessary to resolve all outstanding issues relating to the Syrian declaration under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

13. The first report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team pursuant to paragraph 10 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, “Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use”, was issued on 8 April 2020, and its findings were considered by the OPCW Executive Council at its ninety-fourth session, held from 7 to 10 July 2020. The use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances is intolerable, and impunity for their use is equally unacceptable. Therefore, it is imperative to hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons.

III. Replies received from Governments

Brunei Darussalam

[Original: English]
[31 May 2020]

Brunei Darussalam is very supportive of regional and global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts concerning arms classified as weapons of mass destruction, and aligns itself with the international and regional commitments on such issues, specifically the commitment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in that regard. A foreign policy that is strongly supportive of international norms, peace and security, ensuring the absence of nuclear weapons, including in the Middle East, would be conducive to the international interests of Brunei Darussalam.

Brunei Darussalam maintains friendly relations with many Middle Eastern nations and has forged defence cooperation with countries such as Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Brunei Darussalam has also actively deployed members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces to participate in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon since 2008. In the light of such relations, Brunei Darussalam remains committed to supporting agreements and conventions to effectively reduce the threat of nuclear weapons in all regions, including the Middle East, and has always sought to encourage peaceful dialogue, transparency, confidence-building measures and multilateral efforts on related issues.

Canada

[Original: English and French]
[29 May 2020]

Canada continues to advocate strongly for the full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and specifically for the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East based on consent by all States in the region. In 2019, Canada voted in favour of General Assembly resolution [74/30](#), entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-

weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”. In November 2019, Canada attended the opening session of the inaugural Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held in New York. In addition, as a member of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, Canada endorsed in February 2020 a ministerial statement which, inter alia, called on all States to support the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones in all regions of the world on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region, including the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the 1995 resolution, and noted that ministers were encouraged by the first session of the Conference, held in 2019, and the continuous efforts in that regard.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[29 May 2020]

Colombia has voluntarily submitted this report pursuant to paragraphs 10 and 11 of General Assembly resolution 74/30 – Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, which state the following:

“10. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 46/30 and taking into account the evolving situation in the region, and to seek from those States their views on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to the report of the Secretary-General of 10 October 1994 or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East;

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

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

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

In addition, Colombia supports the provisions of resolution GC(63)/RES/13 adopted on 19 September 2019 at the eighth plenary meeting of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, relating to the need for States in the Middle East to accept “the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all their nuclear activities as an important confidence-building measure among all States in the region and as a step in enhancing peace and security in the context of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone”.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[8 May 2020]

Cuba believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important contribution to international efforts seeking the total elimination of nuclear

weapons. In that regard, it commends efforts made to establish such zones in all regions of the world. It also reiterates its concern over the danger to humanity represented by the existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use.

Cuba is located in the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), which has been a political, legal and institutional benchmark for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world.

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

Cuba regrets that, despite calls from the international community and the many resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and the International Atomic Energy Agency, it has not been possible to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

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

We note the holding, in November 2019, of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546. In the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, this Conference is an important and integral part of the final outcome of the review process, helping to restore confidence in the Treaty and in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime in general.

Cuba reiterates its firm commitment to achieving a widespread, fair and lasting peace in the Middle East and calls for the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East to be convened without further delay and without preconditions.

Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]
[31 May 2020]

In 1963, Ecuador was one of the five Latin American countries to sign the Presidential Declaration that opened the door to the negotiation of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which in 1968 created the world’s first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, whose first Secretary-General was an Ecuadorian diplomat.

Ecuador believes that, as more territories declare themselves free of nuclear weapons, there will be greater awareness of the illegality of the use of these weapons, making a concrete contribution to building a safe world, and has therefore welcomed the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world (Africa, South Pacific, South-East Asia, Central Asia and Mongolia).

In line with this position, Ecuador regrets that the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear

weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, a resolution linked to the decision taken at the same Conference to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons indefinitely, has not yet been implemented. Ecuador also regrets that the commitments made at subsequent Review Conferences for the implementation of this resolution were not fulfilled.

Furthermore, Ecuador has welcomed General Assembly Decision A/73/546, which mandated the Secretary-General to convene a Conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as well as the first session of this Conference, which was held from 18 to 22 November 2019. It hopes that, as far as the circumstances of the current health emergency allow, the second meeting of the Conference will be held as intended from 16 to 20 November 2020.

Indonesia

[Original: English]
[31 May 2020]

Indonesia underlines the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones as stipulated in article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, affirming the rights of a group of States to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as the risk of their unauthorized, unintentional or accidental use. Any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be a crime against humanity and a violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular, international humanitarian law. The mere possession of nuclear weapons is inconsistent with the principles of international humanitarian law.

Nuclear-weapon States must refrain, under all circumstances, from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty, including, inter alia, through the complete exclusion of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons from all their military and security concepts, doctrines and policies.

Moreover, nuclear-weapon States should not engage in activities that constitute the transfer and/or sharing of their nuclear weapons capabilities or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly. Accordingly, non-nuclear-weapon States should not undertake to receive such transfer and/or sharing, as stipulated under articles I and II of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

For many years after the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the General Assembly has annually adopted resolutions calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Although it has been decades since the first resolution was adopted in 1974, a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East has not yet been materialized.

Indonesia is of the view that the establishment of an effectively verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote that enabled the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995. The establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East is essential to achieve the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament, and in particular the establishment therein of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, we hope that countries in the Middle East will renew their commitment to resolve its undertaking aimed at prompting the convening of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. In that regard, Indonesia welcomes the convening of the first Conference, held in 2019.

Pending the conclusion of the nuclear-weapon-free zone, all concerned States in the Middle East should universalize the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the region and sign and ratify the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Moreover, we encourage all States in the Middle East to further sign and ratify the additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement.

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

[Original: English]

[31 May 2020]

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East – a proposal originally presented by Iran in 1974.

The international community has consistently recognized the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East as an important measure to enhance peace and security in the region. Iran expresses its deep concern over the lack of progress in the establishment of such a zone.

The Israeli regime, by possessing nuclear weapons and refusing to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, continues to be the main obstacle to the establishment of such a zone.

The underlying driving force for the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East by the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the outcomes of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences has been a shared concern among the States parties to the Treaty regarding the grave danger and threat that the nuclear weapons programme of Israel poses to the security and stability of the Middle East and beyond, as well as the objective of global non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Peace and stability cannot be achieved in that volatile region as long as the Israeli nuclear arsenal exists. During its short history since its inception, the Israeli regime has waged 17 wars; committed aggression against all its neighbours; threatened to use force against countries in the region; and continued to illegally occupy the territories of several neighbouring countries. On 29 August 2018, the Prime Minister of the Israeli regime, Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking at its underground nuclear weapons development centre, Dimona, explicitly threatened Iran with nuclear annihilation.

Furthermore, the Israeli regime continues to block all international and regional diplomatic efforts for the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

It is obvious that the Israeli intransigence and defiance of international norms and rules are not viable without the blind support of the United States. Despite its clear international commitment and responsibility, under the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the outcomes of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences on the Middle East, to undertake all necessary measures for prompt implementation of the 1995 resolution, the United States continues its non-compliance with those commitments. There should be no doubt that as long as the United States continues its irresponsible and hypocritical policy regarding the illicit nuclear weapons

programme of Israel, which is the real source of proliferation in the region, the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East will continue to exist.

Such realities make it abundantly clear that, in order to make progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the United States must cease providing cover and assistance for the illegitimate nuclear weapons programme of the Israeli regime, and the international community should exert sustained and coordinated pressure on the regime to compel it to accede to the Treaty without any precondition or further delay and as a non-nuclear weapon party, and to place all of its nuclear activities and facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the convening, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held in November 2019 at United Nations Headquarters. Iran participated in the first session of the Conference in a constructive and active manner, and continues to contribute to and support meaningful steps aimed at making progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in appropriate international forums, including the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be convened in November 2020, as well as the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In that regard, Iran stresses the essential role of the United Nations in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and expects the Secretary-General to vigorously continue his efforts to promote that objective and to reaffirm the need for the accession of Israel –without any precondition or further delay and as a non-nuclear-weapon party – to the Treaty as a meaningful step towards realizing the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

Israel

[Original: English]

[14 February 2020]

The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reiterates its explanation of vote on resolution [74/30](#) entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, adopted by the General Assembly on 12 December 2019, made at the meeting of the First Committee held on 1 November 2019 during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

It took a long time and considerable international efforts to reach consensus on the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. Although Israel had its own deep reservations about the resolution, which have been voiced every year in our explanations of position, Israel supported the resolution for the sake of consensus, as the consistent approach of Israel has always been constructive.

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

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

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]

[15 May 2020]

Following are the comments of the Ministry of National Defence (Lebanese Army Command):

Lebanon does not possess weapons of mass destruction and regards the threat or use of such weapons as illegal.

Lebanon complies with United Nations resolutions, in particular with regard to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, and cooperates in efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. It expresses its deep concern, however, regarding the Israeli enemy's failure to adhere to international law. Israel maintains a nuclear arsenal that constitutes a threat to all the countries of the region, and consequently to international peace and security.

Lebanon supports and welcomes all initiatives to achieve nuclear disarmament, particularly in the Middle East, and reaffirms the role of the United Nations in that regard.

Lebanon has introduced laws and regulations that allow for the monitoring of the export, transit and cross-border transport of any type of weapon of mass destruction or related components

Lebanon does not provide assistance of any kind to any group seeking to acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, provide or use nuclear or other weapons.

Lebanon supports Arab conferences and initiatives aimed at eliminating the causes of tension in the Middle East, in particular those that are aimed at ridding the region of weapons of mass destruction. It participates actively in all meetings of the technical committee responsible for preparing a draft treaty that would make the Middle East a region that is free of weapons of mass destruction and, in particular, nuclear weapons. Lebanon stresses that the Israeli enemy's weapons of mass destruction represent a threat to international peace and Arab national security.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]

[23 March 2020]

Mexico, as the main promoter of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated territory, underlines its unreserved support for efforts aimed at the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world. This stems from the fact that, by establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones, the States that form them undertake specific obligations not to develop, acquire or use nuclear weapons. Those States also thereby prevent the deployment in their own territories of weapons of that type belonging to another State. Militarily denuclearized zones are thus not an end in themselves, but an intermediate step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In the particular case of the Middle East, Mexico has supported the efforts of the international community to achieve that end, within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Mexico considers it essential to urge those countries that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty.

Mexico believes that the promotion of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is an important part of the commitments that forged the agreement on the indefinite

extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995, as well as the agreements of the 2000 and 2010 Treaty Review Conferences. That is because the establishment of such a zone would help to reduce tensions in the region, while creating an atmosphere of peace and security which can contribute to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the region.

In that context, Mexico takes note of the positive results of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, as well as the adoption of a political declaration. This shows the commitment of the States of the region to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and their willingness to act in that connection.

Mexico hopes that it will be possible to hold the fourth Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia prior to the tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

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

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[21 April 2020]

- Qatar reaffirms that the agreed upon definition of the Middle East region encompasses all the States members of the League of Arab States, Israel and Iran.
- It underscores that the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is an international commitment that has been reaffirmed in various General Assembly resolutions, review conference documents and official declarations. To delay implementing that commitment calls into question the credibility of international institutions and the international community.
- It stresses the need to update the United Nations study, so that it reflects the fact that all Arab States have become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the fact that Israel is the only country in the Middle East that is not a party thereto.
- Qatar reaffirms that, as stated in chapter III, para. 81, of the study, in order to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone, it would be essential for all States of the region to accede to Non-Proliferation Treaty and place all nuclear facilities under a comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime. That requirement is of relevance to Israel only, since all States of the region that have nuclear facilities have placed those facilities under IAEA safeguards.
- Israel must be compelled to participate in ongoing negotiations through the United Nations-sponsored Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- Confidence-building measures relating to nuclear weapons can be discussed and adopted only in the context of the United Nations-sponsored Conference, in which Israel refuses to participate.

IV. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]

[31 May 2020]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

further establishment of such zones, including in the Middle East. The European Union takes note of the first-ever Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held in New York from 18 to 22 November 2019. The European Union calls on all parties to further their efforts to build an inclusive and consensus-based process, including all States of the region, taking into account the security concerns of those States and covering all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, in line with the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference and the final outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference. The European Union reconfirms its readiness to assist the process leading to the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East, as it has done in the past by facilitating dialogue among States of the region. Specific legislative acts have been adopted by the European Union to support United Nations works in that regard. Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/809 supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), where assistance requests from States to take additional, practical steps to implement the obligations of resolution 1540 (2004) at the national level gives priority to States from, inter alia, the Gulf and Middle East region.

A number of legislative acts adopted in 2019 by the European Union support the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East.

Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/615 of 15 April 2019 was adopted to support activities leading up to the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty review cycle continued with the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, which was held in New York from 27 April to 10 May 2019. The European Union delivered four statements, one of which in support of the creation of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East.

The Council adopted its decision (CFSP) 2019/938 of 6 June 2019 in support of a process of confidence-building leading to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Council Decision is in line with efforts of the European Union to bring the process forward by organizing seminars and meetings, such as those held in 2011 and 2012, respectively. The aim is to enhance confidence-building through a number of seminars, workshops and research projects with a view to reaching a deeper collective understanding of the successes and failures related to previous efforts, and eventually allowing for ideas on new avenues and proposals leading to a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The project will last for three years.

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

The European Union also confirms its readiness to continue to assist the Middle East region through the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative, launched in response to the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of countries outside the European Union to mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks. The centres of excellence established in Jordan, Algeria, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates contribute to enhanced capacity-building in the region. Examples thereof include training in radiological detection undertaken by the Middle East Centre of Excellence in Amman from 8 to 10 April 2019, within the framework of the European Union Initiative, and training in risk mitigation, in which the European Union engaged with

Iraqi chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear authorities from 9 to 12 September 2019.

The European Union continues to call upon all States in the region that have not yet done so to accede to and abide by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and to conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, the Additional Protocol and, as applicable, a modified Small Quantities Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Also, subscribing to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missiles Proliferation could contribute to regional confidence-building, which is necessary for progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.
