



General Assembly

Distr.: General
1 March 2022

Original: English

Seventy-seventh session

Item 102 of the preliminary list*

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene annual sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the decision of the Conference on the dates of its second session ([A/CONF.236/DEC.5](#)), the second session of the Conference was held from 29 November to 3 December 2021 at United Nations Headquarters. In its decision 73/546, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report annually to it on developments in that regard. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. Pursuant to decision 73/546, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to participating States of the Conference,¹ inviting them to participate at the second session. Invitations were also sent to the three co-sponsors 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,² the other two nuclear-weapon States³ and the relevant international organizations⁴ to attend the Conference as observers.

* [A/77/50](#).

¹ Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and State of Palestine (see the report by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East (GOV/2018/38-GC(62)/6)).

² Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

³ China and France.

⁴ International Atomic Energy Agency, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit.



3. The President-designate, the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, Mansour Alotaibi, convened several informal consultations prior to the second session to discuss various issues related to the preparations for the session, including the agenda, the programme of work and the rules of procedure, as well as approaches to address substantive issues, including the thematic debate. The informal consultations were held on 31 August, 19 October and 23 November 2021.

II. Conference proceedings and outcomes

4. The second session of the Conference was opened on 29 November 2021 by Sudqi Al Omoush (Jordan) on behalf of the presidency of the first session of the Conference. In accordance with the decision taken at the first session on the Conference's rotating presidency (A/CONF.236/DEC.4), the Conference endorsed by acclamation Kuwait as President of the second session of the Conference and invited Mansour Alotaibi (Kuwait) to preside over the Conference. The Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, Abdulla Shahid (Maldives), made statements at the opening of the session. Owing to the restrictions related to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) placed on in-person attendance at such events at United Nations Headquarters, it was agreed that the opening and closing meetings be broadcast live on United Nations Web TV to allow other Member States, relevant international organizations, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations to observe the conference proceedings.

5. Following the opening meeting, a general debate was held, during which participating States and observer States, as well as international organizations, made statements. The ensuing thematic debate was focused on a list of key issues related to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the basis of an informal paper presented by the President. The issues included principles and objectives; core obligations related to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, including verification; transparency and security through implementation of the treaty; definition of clarifications, consultations and cooperation; peaceful uses and international cooperation; institutional arrangements, entry into force and dispute settlement; protocols, including security assurances; and other relevant issues.

6. The Conference agreed to include a summary of the thematic debate reflecting positions and views presented by participating States on those key issues in its final report (A/CONF.236/2021/4) as a basis for continued deliberation, including during the intersessional period.

7. The Conference decided to establish a working committee, open to all members of the Conference, to continue deliberations during the period between annual sessions of the Conference on issues related to the mandate of the Conference, as contained in General Assembly decision 73/546, on the basis of the outcomes of each annual session of the Conference (A/CONF.236/2021/DEC.3).

8. The Conference, after intensive consultation, adopted its rules of procedure (A/CONF.236/2021/3). It was decided that the third session of the Conference would be held from 14 to 18 November 2022 at United Nations Headquarters.

9. The Conference received working papers from Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation. A background paper was presented by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.⁵

⁵ Available at https://meetings.unoda.org/section/me-nwmdfz-2021_documents_16152/.

III. Observations

10. The Secretary-General welcomes the positive steps taken by participating States under the Kuwaiti presidency to maintain the momentum of the process and to continue to make progress towards achieving the goal of establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as mandated by the General Assembly in decision 73/546. Attaining this objective could greatly enhance regional and international peace and security.

11. The Secretary-General believes that this conference process provides a valuable opportunity and a meaningful framework for the States in the Middle East and other stakeholders to engage in serious dialogue and to build trust and confidence in a joint effort to address all the issues of concern with respect to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region.

12. The Secretary-General commends the constructive, transparent and inclusive approach adopted by the successive Presidents and States that participated in the Conference with respect to the conference process. The Secretary-General continues to call upon all States in the Middle East to participate in and to contribute to this important process, and encourages the international community, including civil society, to continue to provide its support to the process.

13. The Secretary-General is fully committed to fulfilling the mandate entrusted to him in General Assembly decision 73/546 and reaffirms that the realization of such a zone in the Middle East would be of significant value to international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, and to peace and security, as well as socioeconomic development, in the Middle East.
