Statement by

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to the United Nations

before
the First Committee

on agenda item 63:
“Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone
in the region of the Middle East”

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Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time I am addressing the Committee in this session, allow me to extend our sincere congratulation to you and, through you, to the members of the Bureau on your elections to these high offices. We are confident that the proceedings of this Committee will be successfully steered under your able and wise leadership.

I would like also to express our appreciation to the United Nations Secretary-General, for his reports on agenda item 63: “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the region of the Middle East”, contained in documents A/57/214 and Addendums 1 and 2.

Mr. Chairman,

The Organization of the Islamic Conference keenly observes and participates in the deliberations of the First Committee, which addresses issues of concern to its Member States, all of whom are also Member States of the United Nations, and we shall be following these issues with much interest. Among these are the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in Central Asia, and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the region of the Middle East.

Having recognized the fact that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zone is an effective mean to prevent nuclear proliferation, and should contribute towards nuclear disarmament and lead to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has had this issue in its agenda since 1976. Thenceforth, progress has been made on the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free-zone in Africa, following the successful conclusion of the signing ceremony in Egypt in 1996 of the African Nuclear-Weapon–Free Zone. Our Organization has welcomed and supported this positive development.
The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, at its 29th Session, held in Khartoum, the Sudan, in June 2002, has joined the international community in welcoming the recent agreement to establish a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in Central Asia as a very important step in the disarmament process.

Mr. Chairman,

As for the region of the Middle East, it is regrettable that Israel remains, in fact, the only obstacle towards achieving the goal of establishing a nuclear weapon free-zone in this region. In this regard, the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, which I have referred to, has adopted a resolution, urging all States, specially nuclear weapon States, to exert pressure on Israel to accede to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It also called on the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to compel Israel to comply with the relevant resolutions, specially Security Council resolution 487(1981), to immediately implement the resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), calling for subjection of all Israeli atomic facilities to the IAEA’s Comprehensive Safeguard System.

I should add that the resolution has also requested all Member States of the Organization to keep up, and further coordinate, their positions at the United Nations and other relevant international fora to promote the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by referring to your statement on 30 September before this Committee, and I quote “Our goals must be to continue the process of strengthening global norms to eliminate the
deadliest weapons the world has ever known, promoting control over other weapons that threatens international peace and security, and exploring measures to advance conflict prevention and the peaceful resolution of disputes.” It is our ardent hope that the international community will collectively work towards the achievement of these noble goals, so that peace and security will prevail.