EGYPT

16 October 2008

STATEMENT INTRODUCING DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON “ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST” AND “THE RISK OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST”

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor of formally introducing two important resolutions today, namely the draft resolution entitled “Establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Region of the Middle East” and the draft resolution entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”.

The draft resolution entitled “Establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Region of the Middle East” as contained in document L.1 is the same text as resolution 62/18, adopted last year, by consensus, under the same agenda item, and has only been technically updated. The draft addresses one of the most important goals foreseen since 1974 as a recipe for lasting peace, security and stability in the Middle East. It represents both a regional and an international vision for the future of the Middle East and a requirement for confidence building, and mutual trust between States of the region, away from illusions of nuclear might, instabilities of nuclear arms races, and the existence of imbalanced obligations in the nuclear area. Indeed, our vision for a nuclear-weapon-free zone is sincere, and is only strengthened through the collective agreement we have maintained and protected on this resolution all those years, as well as its lofty aim in the United Nations. We look forward to the continued adoption of the resolution by consensus, in order to renew our common determination to fulfill its objectives and to bring with them, a safer, more stable and more secure Middle East for all its peoples, without exception.

Mr. Chairman,
The second draft resolution, contained in document L.2, entitled “The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East”, represents the same unchanged text of resolution 62/56, under the same agenda item, only technically updated for this session. As is traditionally the case, the draft resolution is presented by Egypt and sponsored by other States members of the League of Arab States (Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Palestine). We believe that Israel’s accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its placement of its nuclear facilities under full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, will not only fulfill the long awaited universality of the NPT in the Middle East, to positively reflect on a wide range of international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control regimes, but also to address a serious imbalance in nuclear commitments between States of the region, that represents an unsustainable situation that can easily ignite arms races and bring nothing but havoc to our region.

Last year, resolution 62/56 on “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East” enjoyed the support of 170 States in the General Assembly. We hope that this significant international support will indeed increase this year and invite the few States which voted against the resolution or abstained on it to reconsider their positions and to join the international community in supporting it this year. Indeed, the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is one that requires consolidated resolve, and commitment from the whole of the international community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman