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Statement by

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Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you steer our deliberations towards a successful outcome.

Mr. Chairperson,

The year which has passed since we last gathered in this committee, has seen a new Middle East evolving. The Arab world is undergoing a historic and significant transformation. The potential positive implications of the democratization process in the Middle East, may offer an opportunity for better atmosphere, which could be conducive to the building of essential trust and confidence among regional parties. While this process of transformation may yield positive results in the region, it harbors at the same time potential risks of instability and polarization. Time alone will tell whether the Arab spring will turn into a full blossom or whether it will become a relentless winter. It is Israel's sincere hope that the positive outcome will prevail.

At present, no regional dialogue exists in the Middle East, nor is there a mechanism to develop confidence building measures between the countries of the region. Embarking on a process which could result in the eventual establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction is therefore incredibly complex. It raises many practical questions that emanate from the chronically unstable nature of the Middle East and the absence of a broader regional peace.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel's perspective and policy, in the field of regional security and arms control, has always been a pragmatic and realistic approach. It is rooted in its belief that all security concerns of regional members, should be taken into account and be
addressed within the regional context. The essential prerequisites before the eventual establishment of the Middle East as a mutually verifiable zone, free of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems are, inter alia, comprehensive and durable peace between the regional parties, and full compliance by all regional states with their arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. The international experience has demonstrated that such a zone can only emanate from within a region, through direct negotiations between regional states. The Middle East region is no exception. No majority vote and one-sided resolutions in international fora can be a substitute for a broad regional dialogue and cooperation.

In this spirit, Israel has positively engaged last July in Brussels in the EU Seminar titled "promoting confidence building in support of a process aimed at establishing a zone free of WMD and means of delivery in the Middle East". Israel has also adopted a positive attitude towards the initiative by the IAEA Director General, to convene a Forum in November, "in which participants from the Middle East and other interested parties could learn from the experience of other regions including in the area of confidence building relevant to the establishment of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone". We believe that these complex issues must be addressed in direct discussions between the regional parties that can bridge differences and not exacerbate them.

Mr. Chairperson,

For many years now the agenda of the First Committee includes two resolutions regarding the Middle-East. The first deals with establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in the region. This resolution has commanded consensus for around thirty years and although Israel has certain reservations regarding its language, we do support the annual endorsement of this visionary goal.

In stark contrast to this spirit of cooperation, the Arab League is tabling a second resolution item, titled the "Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East". This is a
contentious resolution that seeks to divert attention from the activities of some regional members, which constitute flagrant violations of international obligations undertaken in the disarmament and non-proliferation sphere. It continues to ignore the region's real source of proliferation dangers. It also chooses to disregard the extreme hostility of certain countries in the region that continue to reject any form of peaceful reconciliation and coexistence with Israel. The tabling of this resolution constitutes an annual declaration by its sponsors that they prefer to continue trying to alienate and isolate Israel, rather than engage Israel in a cooperative manner. The decision of its sponsors to add, last year, a paragraph on 2012 regional conference in this particular resolution raises profound questions regarding the real motivation of the Arab states.

In September this year, during the IAEA GC, the Arab states decided not to table the INC resolution again. It was explained by them as a step to build confidence before upcoming events such as the November IAEA Forum. The gesture made in Vienna will be more credible if displayed also in other Arms Control fora, including the UN First Committee in New York. This distinguished committee would do well to foster and encourage initiatives of a conciliatory nature designed to reduce and lessen regional tensions rather than aggravate them. It is in this context that we call upon UN Member states to reject this approach and vote against this resolution.

Mr. Chairperson,

The region of the Middle East has embodied and reflected many of the arms control and disarmament challenges faced by the international community. This is the result of what one can only describe as habitual indulgence of some Middle Eastern states in becoming party to international instruments which they do not intend to implement and in some cases even outright intend to breach. There is no coincidence in the fact that four out of the five gross violations of the NPT have occurred in the Middle East - Iraq under Saddam Hussein, Libya, Syria and Iran,
whilst the fifth case, namely the DPRK, has been deeply involved in nuclear proliferation to the Middle East.

Indeed, the most dangerous phenomena in the Middle East and well beyond is Iran's hostile policies and statements, its nuclear weapons pursuit, aggressive development of missile technology and its active involvement in support and training of terrorist organizations and individuals. Israel in particular has consistently been the target of Iran's vicious anti-Semitic campaign, including in this building, notably statements made year after year by Iran's President calling for the destruction of Israel. The possibility that terrorists would enjoy an Iranian nuclear umbrella, or that they would actually receive such weapons from the Iranian regime, is startling and poses an imminent threat to regional as well as global peace and stability. We are convinced that without halting the Iranian nuclear program, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to promote an international or regional agenda aimed at strengthening the prevailing non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chairperson,

The international community has been shaken this year by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident. Our hearts go out to the Government and people of Japan. Over this tragic backdrop, it is not surprising that the safety of nuclear power, and the future of the nuclear industry, has become pressing issues in many countries. Nuclear safety should become a first order priority when countries consider the development and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In a volatile region like the Middle-East, and given the poor track record of some regional countries, the issue of technology misuse should also be addressed.

The Nuclear security Summit hosted by the US President Barack Obama recognized the close association between the threat of nuclear proliferation, and the threat of nuclear terrorism sponsored and supported by rogue states. With the collapse of Gaddafi's regime, and the volatile situation in Syria, efforts by the international community should be directed towards urgent counter proliferation issues in these
two countries. This worrisome situation in Libya and Syria is a fresh reminder of the need to work together to secure nuclear and chemical materials and to prevent illicit nuclear trafficking and terrorism. This topic should also be the focus of the second Nuclear Security Summit, to be held in South Korea next year.

Mr. Chairperson,

Despite its inability to adequately address the particular challenges of the Middle East, Israel has always valued the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and acknowledged its importance. Israel has over the years demonstrated a consistent policy of responsibility and restraint in the nuclear domain and has supported and, wherever possible, joined treaties and initiatives aimed at curbing and halting nuclear proliferation.

As a signatory to the CTBT, Israel is an active member of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. It maintains two seismic monitoring stations and has contributed significantly to the build-up of the Treaty's verification regime. Israel appreciates the significant progress made in the development of this verification regime, whose completion is a prerequisite to Entry Into force of the Treaty in accordance with Article IV of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel attributes importance to discussing the revitalization of the CD. While there can be no dispute that the CD is in need of an up-to-date and clear vision that would allow it to overcome a long stalemate, the revitalization of the CD has to take place from within the CD itself. The CD is a unique body, widely recognized as the single multi-lateral negotiating body in the disarmament sphere. Its singularity stems from its membership— as well as from its rules of procedure. Although criticized by some as out dated and as a reflection of past geo-political realities, Israel remains convinced that the rules of procedure are suited for the complexity and sensitivity of
the issues placed on the CD’s agenda. The rules of procedure, and in particular the rule of consensus, reflect the necessity to protect vital security interests and to provide negotiating states with the comfort levels required for dealing with such critical issues. In principle, Israel does not support taking outside the CD issues which are mandated to this body, nor do we find such initiatives as being necessarily helpful for the promotion of meaningful work in the CD.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel has been stressing for several years that the prevention of transfers of conventional and non-conventional arms to terrorists should be addressed by the international community as a matter of priority. For example, recent cases have demonstrated once again the threat that may be caused by MANPADS. Some of these missiles could have fallen into wrong hands and present a serious threat to civil aviation. It is our view that a clear and comprehensive norm banning transfer of arms to terrorists should be created, alongside the demand for concrete steps to be taken. One venue where this issue could be addressed is within the CD. While the stalemate persists over the four core issues, it would be advisable to set our sights on the promotion of other issues. The creation of such a comprehensive norm banning the transfers of arms to terrorists could be taken up under agenda item 7 Transparency in Armaments. It should deal with both the licit as well as the illicit aspects of the arms transfers.

In this context, Israel welcomes the successful finalization of the preparatory process of the Arms Trade Treaty. It is Israel’s view that the negotiations, planned for next summer, could eventually lead to the creation of a good legally binding instrument, provided that the following principles are endorsed by all parties to the negotiating:

- The ATT should opt for the high and robust standards on export control.
• The ATT should include concrete measures in order to combat arms transfers to terrorists and to non-state actors. These should be based on a broad agreement as to which recipients should not be permitted to receive armaments. In this respect, we should not rely on states' subjective interpretation as to who is a terrorist, but rather use agreed objective criteria. One option would be to use the 13 treaties which have been concluded by the international community on terrorist activities, as objective criteria to assess the legality of arms transfers.

• The decisions on arms export must remain under the full responsibility and sovereign considerations of states.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel supports the ongoing negotiations on a new Protocol on Cluster Munitions in the framework of the CCW, aimed at finding the appropriate balance between military and humanitarian concerns. We are of the view that these negotiations could have a real impact on the ground from a humanitarian point of view. It is our hope that states, which have been engaged in parallel tracks, would not hold out on the possibility of achieving substantive achievements in the CCW. Much work, efforts and resources have been invested in the negotiation process during the past four years. The 4th Review Conference of the CCW will take place next month, and we trust and hope that we would be in a position to adopt the Sixth Protocol at this time. From the humanitarian viewpoint, further delay in the adoption of this Protocol cannot be justified.

Mr. Chairperson,

Illicit trade and uncontrolled transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has severe destabilizing effects and humanitarian consequences and pose an acute threat to international peace and security. Israel welcomes the useful and
professional discussions that have taken place during the Open Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts in May 2011, on the marking, record keeping and cooperation on tracing of small arms. Israel is ready to play its part and engage constructively with other member states to contribute to the success of the next Review Conference on the Implementation of the PoA in 2012. This success could be yet another step to bolster our resolve to prevent the transfer of arms to terrorists and reduce the human suffering caused by this phenomenon.

Mr. Chairperson,

As a State Party to the CCW and Amended Protocol II, Israel has undertaken concrete measures aimed at reducing the potential adverse consequences that may be associated with the use of anti-personnel landmines, thereby striking an appropriate balance between humanitarian concerns and legitimate security needs. In this respect:

In March 2011 the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, has unanimously passed the Minefield Clearance Law that sets out a statutory framework for the clearance of minefields not essential to Israel’s national security in a short and defined framework. The Law establishes the Israeli National Mine Action Authority (NMAA), which is tasked with the formulation and implementation of multi-year and national mine actions plans, and with determining national demining specifications, while taking into consideration, inter alia, the International Mine Action Standards endorsed by the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group. Unfortunately, as long as the regional security situation continues to impose a threat on Israel’s safety and sovereignty, the need to protect the Israeli borders- including through the use of AP mines- cannot diminished.

In 1994 Israel unilaterally declared a moratorium on any export, sales or transfers, of all types of anti-personnel mines. The Moratorium was declared in recognition of the grave humanitarian consequences associated with anti-personnel mines and the need, in this respect, for self imposed state restraint. Since its initiation, the
A moratorium has been extended for additional three years periods, most recently in July 2011.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel aspires to achieve peace and security for all the peoples of the Middle East. We hope that the day will come when a regional security framework encompassing all countries of the region will provide a cooperative multilateral response to all the security problems of the region.

On the beginning of the Jewish New Year, let me wish Member States, their delegates here present, and the Secretariat, fruitful deliberations during this session, and full success of the UN First Committee in its activities, which benefit us all.

Thank you.