Statement by Ambassador Amr RAMADAN
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to the United Nations Office, WTO and other International
Organizations at Geneva

Before

The Open Ended Working Group (OEWG)
On Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament
Negotiations

Mr. Chairman,

Since, I was not there at the Organizational meeting on 28 January 2016, allow me first to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the Open Ended Working Group and express my hope that your wisdom would help steer us in "taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations," pursuant to General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/33. Your leadership skills and able guidance, substantive work in this group can be achieved and contribute to international community's efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

We would like to associate Egypt with the statement to be delivered by Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC).

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption of GA Resolution 70/33 was a landmark on the efforts pursued by membership of this Organization to achieve nuclear disarmament. Egypt was amongst the 138 States that voted for the resolution in light of its straightforward mandate ‘to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons,’ as well as ‘substantively address recommendations on other measures that could contribute to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations,’ such as transparency measures, measures to reduce and eliminate the risk of nuclear weapon detonation and other measures to increase awareness of the humanitarian consequences of any nuclear detonation.

The outcome of the three conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons undoubtedly manifested clearly the limited ability of the international community to stand up to the ramifications of detonation of a single nuclear weapon. This should be a wake-up call for the international community to launch immediate negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament in fulfillment of previously agreed obligations.

The establishment of this OEWG comes further at a critical juncture in the course of international disarmament machinery, with a fresh memory over the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the NPT to agree to an outcome document, and the twentieth anniversary of stagnation of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament. Egypt perceives the work of the OEWG as a positive contribution to the substantive work of the CD whose role and function, as
set out in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, was reaffirmed by resolution 70/33. We are encouraged by the plethora of proposals that the CD is addressing at its 2016 session and call upon the CD members to rise to the expectations of the international community and agree without delay on a balanced and comprehensive program of work that would kick-off its substantive work.

Mr. Chairman,

Whilst considerable progress has been made to strengthen non-proliferation norms, achieving the long desired goal of a world free of nuclear weapons has been elusive. The work of this Working Group does not, nevertheless, commence in a vacuum. It builds on the outcome of its predecessor in 2013, which was a result of extensive and interactive discussions among the participating States themselves from one side and with the civil society from another. We expect, however, that the outcome of this Group will address substantively issues that were not properly highlighted in the outcome of its predecessor, such as the value of deterrence in the 21st century, the role assigned to nuclear weapons in military and security doctrines of some non-nuclear weapons States, and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons by qualitative advancement and modernization.

Furthermore, while we are confident that, under your guidance, the mandate of the United Nations General Assembly resolution is going to be fulfilled, we also believe that sufficient effective measures to achieve a world without nuclear weapons have been identified and all what is yet needed is to address and recommend the most appropriate, comprehensive, legally binding and effectively verifiable instrument among these measures, dealing with the various elements relating to nuclear disarmament. It is our expectation that identifying and recommending this instrument could be the most valuable contribution of this Working Group, which would underpin and guide all future efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

We look forward to the work of the Open Ended Working Group and the opportunity this forum represents in allowing a fruitful and concrete debate on taking forward multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.