STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

SPECIFIC ISSUE - REGIONAL ISSUES, INCLUDING WITH RESPECT TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1995 MIDDLE EAST RESOLUTION

5 MAY 2008

Geneva

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Chairperson,

At the outset my delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement under this item.

South Africa remains concerned over the continued existence of weapons of mass destruction programmes, and in particular the existence of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in this sensitive region.

Chairperson,

South Africa would like to see progress towards the bargains struck at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT which adopted the Resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.1995/32/RS.1), calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Given the strained relations in the region, South Africa believes that the States of the region should work towards easing the tension and working to produce peace and security. South Africa therefore supports the efforts of states in the Middle East region to pursue a comprehensive solution to these challenges.

South Africa considers the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as an indispensable and integral part of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. With regard to our continent, important progress has been made in the establishment of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa with 4 ratifications needed for the Treaty of Pelindaba to enter into force.

Chairperson,

South Africa believes that the establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East will make a major contribution to the promotion of international peace and security. In this context, my delegation remains concerned that, after more than a decade of deliberations and the determined efforts by many countries in the region, as well as commendable efforts by the Director General of the International Atomic
Energy Agency, Dr Mohamed ElBaradei, no progress has been made yet in the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East region.

We urge all States in this region to make every effort to ensure the early establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

Chairperson,

We therefore call upon Israel to accede to the NPT and to place, without delay, all its nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards, as such a step will work towards reducing the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, and in particular nuclear weapons, in the region.

I thank you.