Mr. Chairman,

This second Preparatory Committee of the 2010 Review Conference will mark 13 years since the adoption in 1995, by consensus, of the indivisible package consisting of Three Decisions as well as a Resolution on the Middle East. It also marks 13 years of fruitless patience on the part of many states in the Middle East, and indeed the world, for some indication of the political will of the State Parties necessary to implement the Middle East Resolution, which represented a pivotal element that facilitated the indefinite extension of the NPT by consensus. The current situation underscores the present reality that the continued lack of implementation of the entire package has an adverse effect on the credibility of the Treaty itself.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation wishes to highlight the following points concerning the Resolution on the Middle East and its objective pertaining to the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East:

**First:** The Middle East's special status was recognized in the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, as well as in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which recognized that the Resolution remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved. Consequently, the Resolution will remain an integral and indivisible part of the NPT Review Process, including all sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference itself. However, keeping the Resolution inscribed on our agenda is not an objective in itself, but rather the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East, as a step towards the Resolution's full implementation given the particular relevance of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to the Treaty and its Review Process.

**Second:** It is important to mention that it is within the competence of this forum to deal with the implementation of the Resolution and ways to strengthen the Treaty regarding nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament exclusively and thus, the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East. The creation of such a zone would constitute a necessary first measure towards the implementation of other important objectives, including the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East Zone Free of all Weapons of Mass Destruction.

**Third:** Implementation of the Resolution, within the context of the NPT, will also represent an effective means of addressing new regional challenges to the Treaty that have arisen since its adoption, and help forestall the emergence of future regional non-proliferation issues. It is crucial to note that lack of progress in implementing the 1995 Resolution constitutes a direct threat to regional and international peace and security since it increases the potential of a nuclear arms race in the region.

**Fourth:** The establishment of this zone would undoubtedly represent a turning point in the history of the region. Not only would it contribute tremendously in promoting regional and international peace and security, and address the security concerns of all states of the region, but it would most certainly represent a practical attestation that destructive arms and weapons would no longer remain the guarantor of security, but rather that security is reinforced through their elimination.
Furthermore it would constitute a substantial confidence building measure that would advance the prospects of overall peace in the region. It is thus the responsibility of all State Parties, particularly the Five Nuclear Weapon States Parties to the Treaty, in the context of their primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security as Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council and by virtue of their special responsibilities in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

It is important at this juncture to underscore the key obstacle facing the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East which is that Israel has chosen to remain outside the NPT, has developed significant nuclear capabilities, and continues to refuse to undertake any commitments related to disarmament and non-proliferation. The General Assembly of the United Nations, the United Nations Security Council, the General Conference of the IAEA, as well as a host of other regional and international bodies have all adopted resolutions dealing with Israel's nuclear capabilities, and calling for Israel to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state and to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA Full Scope Safeguards, as well as for the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East.

Lack of political will, however, coupled with a high degree of deliberate disregard displayed by some States Parties towards Israel's nuclear capabilities, has blocked any progress towards the implementation of the Resolution. Furthermore, deliberate policies adopted by certain State Parties hinder the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East by creating artificial linkages and conditionalities which contradict the principled objective of promoting and strengthening the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Should State Parties continue to fail to address the issue of Israel's nuclear capabilities during the present Review Cycle and not agree to concrete measures leading to the realization of all objectives of the Resolution on the Middle East, the integrity of the NPT would be substantially undermined. It would also place the States of the Middle East, all of which are non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the Treaty, except for Israel, in an untenable position. By contrast the accession of Israel to the NPT and the placement of all of its nuclear facilities under IAEA Full Scope Safeguards would constitute a significant achievement towards the realization of NPT Universality and the enhancement of regional and international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt calls on all NPT States Parties to acknowledge clearly and unequivocally, both at the Preparatory Committees and during the Review Conference, their commitment to the full implementation of the Resolution on the Middle East, primarily in relation to the establishment of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East, and to agree to specific practical steps in this regard. This is the exclusive competence of the NPT. Egypt has formulated a number of non-exhaustive measures, as contained in Working Paper 20 of the Second Preparatory Committee of the 2010 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2010/PC.II/Wp.20), to be considered during this Review Cycle with a view to achieving consensus among States Parties, thereby initiating the implementation of such measures. We look forward to additional contributions from States Parties on practical measures to implement the Middle East Resolution.

Thank you

*****