Statement by H.E. Mr. Mohammad Mahdi Akhondzadeh
Deputy Foreign Minister and Head of Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the First Session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2015 NPT Review Conference
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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Remembering the martyred nuclear scientists

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. I am sure that under your chairmanship this session of the Preparatory Committee will be guided in achieving its objectives. Rest assured of my delegation’s support and cooperation.

I would also like to associate my delegation with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

We are at the start of a new review cycle of the implementation of the NPT. The mandate of the Committee provides the member States with a good opportunity to refocus on the threats against humanity arising from the existence of nuclear weapons, the vital role of nuclear disarmament and all aspects of nonproliferation in promoting international peace and security. In
this context, we need to consider the status of the implementation of the Treaty and the principles and objectives as well as practical steps and actions agreed upon at the previous Review Conferences.

The Islamic Republic of has voiced its critical view of the discriminatory and double-standard approach by some unaccountable member States in implementing the provisions of the Treaty. We believe that the objectives of the Treaty have not been pursued in a balanced manner, and the rights of the non-nuclear-weapon States are not realized in parallel with the fulfillment of their non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty.

It is evident that the mere existence of nearly 23,000 nuclear warheads in the stockpile of the nuclear-weapon States and their continued modernization as the most serious threat to the survival of mankind. It is also widely accepted that as long as nuclear weapons exist, there is always a risk for their use and vertical or horizontal proliferation. Given such threats and risks, nothing can justify the possession of nuclear weapons by a small group of States.

Mr. Chairman,

The 2010 NPT Review Conference adopted an Action Plan on three pillars of the NPT. The major outcome of the 2010 Conference was reaffirmation of the unequivocal undertaking made by the nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 Review Conference to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal. In our view, the mere reaffirmation of commitments or adoption of piecemeal approach is not sufficient to realize the goal of nuclear disarmament.

To realize nuclear disarmament, nuclear-weapon States shall agree on a time-bound framework and a target date for the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal. To this end, the observance of the principle of good faith as stipulated under article VI of the NPT by the nuclear-weapon States is imperative. The Conference on Disarmament should be enabled to commence negotiations on this matter, as the highest priority, and to conclude a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The NAM States parties to the NPT have already proposed 2025 as a target date for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Lack of effective and systematic progress towards implementing nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the NPT is the most serious challenge to the NPT and a disappointing fact. Certain nuclear-weapon States are expected to display sincerity and political will rather than hypocrisy with regard to their nuclear disarmament obligations.

In 2009, a nuclear weapon State by signaling change of its nuclear disarmament-averse policy in favor of a world free from nuclear weapons generated expectations that it will eventually live up to its obligations under the NPT. Contrary to that declared policy, it is planning to spend an estimated $700 billion on modernizing nuclear warheads and building new
production facilities during the next ten years. So, such inconsistency between words and deeds is a vivid manifestation of insincerity.

In the 2010 Review Conference, by agreeing to Action 1 of the Action Plan on nuclear disarmament, all States parties committed to pursue policies that are fully compatible with the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. Regrettably, there are worrying policies and initiatives not conducive to achieving nuclear disarmament. For instance, the ongoing plan to deploy a global missile defence system gravely threatens the nuclear disarmament goal. It is widely believed that such a plan will not increase the security of its sponsor and host countries. It will also prompt countermeasures by those nuclear-weapon States that are the main target of such a system to build up and rely more on their nuclear forces, thus, bringing about a new nuclear arms race.

Another serious concern is the continuation and expansion of nuclear sharing among the nuclear-weapon States or with non-nuclear weapon States under military alliances. A regrettable example in this regard is the agreement signed by France and UK. It is an open secret that France is the only NPT State party that has categorically rejected the legal obligations for nuclear disarmament both in word and action, and has tried to invent a new concept of conditional disarmament. French officials have also tried to divert the attention of international community from their non-compliance with the NPT by raising baseless allegations against the peaceful nuclear program of the others without presenting substantiated evidence.

With regard to negative security assurances, the official policy of a certain nuclear-weapon State announced two years ago has evidenced that application of threats to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon parties to the NPT continues to constitute an institutionalized component of its foreign policy conduct in international relations. Such an announcement has strengthened our conviction that pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, an international legally binding instrument should be negotiated and concluded in order to give unconditional negative security assurances against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Mr. Chairman,

With respect to the non-proliferation pillar of the NPT, we believe that any review should cover both horizontal and vertical proliferation of this horrible weapon.

Compliance by non-nuclear-weapon States with their obligation of not acquiring nuclear weapons has enabled the NPT to largely achieve its objective in halting horizontal proliferation. Against this backdrop, we believe that any call for placing additional non-proliferation requirements on the shoulder of non-nuclear-weapon States is not warranted unless there is systematic and irreversible progress in the elimination of nuclear arsenals within a time-bound
With respect to the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the article IV of the NPT is crystal clear that "nothing shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all parties to the NPT to develop and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with Article I and II of the NPT." In spite of the fact that there exists a commitment under the article IV of the NPT to promote and facilitate the peaceful uses of nuclear energy especially in the territories of non-nuclear weapon States in developing areas, the very States have been subject to discriminatory restrictive control regimes by some developed member States.

While certain countries such as France express concerns over peaceful nuclear activities of Iran which is a non-nuclear party to the Treaty, they has spared no effort in helping Israel, which is a non-party to the NPT, to develop inhumane nuclear weapons. Indeed, France is the founder of Israel's clandestine nuclear weapons program. This is a clear example of double standard and inconsistent approach being pursued towards nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the issue of universality of the Treaty especially in the Middle East. Immediate, full, and unconditional implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East as an essential element on the basis of which the Treaty was indefinitely extended in the 1995 is of high importance to the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this regard, we underline the reaffirmation by the 2010 NPT Review Conference that "the resolution remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved."

The existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Zionist regime of Israel continues to pose the gravest threat to the stability and security of the NPT States parties in the Middle East and has called into question the role and the future of the NPT in the region. The threat posed by possession of nuclear weapons by Israeli regime and its refusal to submit itself to the NPT and placing its nuclear facilities under the IAEA safeguards has prompted a number of States in the region not to accede to international instruments dealing with weapons of mass destruction, most notably CWC and BWC.

Given the dark track records of Israeli regime in aggression, occupation, expansionism and intimidation, the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons is extremely important. The sponsors of the Middle East Resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference have a major responsibility in this regard. The prospect for establishment of nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East can be enhanced only when few nuclear weapon States abandon their long-standing policy of exempting the Zionist regime of Israel from international non-proliferation regime. With respect to the implementation of measures related to the 1995
Resolution on the Middle East, contained in the follow-on actions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the initiator of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East in 1974, is of the firm belief that an agreed plan of action and timetable for universality of the NPT in the Middle East should be the only top priority at the 2012 Conference on the establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free zone in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

Those who have placed themselves and their protégé outside the law continue to make unfounded allegations against Iran’s peaceful nuclear program. As for Iran’s nuclear policy, let there be no doubt that nuclear weapons have no place in our defence doctrine. It is noteworthy that Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran has reiterated his Fatwa on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, and in this line, stressed in his meeting with nuclear scientists a few months ago: “the Iranian nation has never been after nuclear weapons and it will never go after such weapons. The Iranian nation will prove to the world that nuclear weapons do not bring about power.... Iran is not after nuclear weapons. Based on theoretical, ideological and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) perspective, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the possession of nuclear weapons as a big sin and it believes that stockpiling such weapons is futile, harmful and dangerous.”

Mr. Chairman,

As a victim of weapons of mass destruction the Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no effort to materialize its religious belief in achieving a world free from nuclear weapons. To this end, the Islamic Republic of Iran has held two International Conferences on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, respectively on 17-18 April 2010 and 12-13 June 2011, in Tehran, which, inter alia, examined the current challenges towards the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments and finding mechanisms to realize the lofty goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Iran has always declared its readiness for constructive and result-orientated negotiations based on justice and mutual respect. With this approach, we entered into Istanbul talks. Having agreed on the NPT as the basis of the future talks and being ready to negotiate a framework for cooperation based on “step-by-step” and reciprocity approach, we continue to be optimistic about upcoming negotiations. There should be no doubt that the great nation of Iran having sacrificed its nuclear scientists will never abandon exercising its inalienable right to peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.