Egypt’s Statement

before the First Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2015 NPT Review Conference
Vienna, 30 April – 11 May 2012

"Cluster II issues" (Non-Proliferation and Safeguards)

Mr. Chairman,

The Comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA was established to create a balance between the inalienable right of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States (NNWS) to benefit from peaceful applications of nuclear technologies on the one hand, and the prevention of horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons on the other. Indeed, comprehensive safeguards secure the non-diversion of peaceful nuclear activities or material to military nuclear programs.

IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards constitute the NPT’s only verifications mechanism. Egypt believes that international efforts that aim to implement treaty commitments concerning nuclear non-proliferation parallel to those efforts directed to fulfilling commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament must of course be implemented through the Agency’s verification activities, given that it is the sole international agency with the mandate to pursue this role.

Unfortunately, the IAEA’s role while successful in ensuring the non-diversion of nuclear activities or material to military nuclear programs, it has so far had a limited role in preventing vertical proliferation, or in verifying nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, the Agency cannot take any possible action concerning verification in States not party to the NPT who have not yet entered into Comprehensive Safeguards agreements. Israel’s unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and activities, which continue to have a destabilizing impact on regional peace and security, as well as undermining international non-proliferation efforts.
Mr Chairman,

Despite this, Egypt has remained firmly committed to honoring its obligations under its Comprehensive Safeguards agreement, and has remained consistently ever since entering into those obligations. Therefore, it is surprising when those countries that honor their commitments are asked to enter into additional verification obligations, especially in the light of the continued existence of completely unsafeguarded facilities in the Middle East.

In addition, Egypt remains concerned by efforts to redefine existing obligations, under Article IV of the Treaty, with an aim to limiting national options available to others in the nuclear energy field and to impose unjustified restrictions on the principle or scope of acquisition of NNWS of material and technologies to develop peaceful nuclear programmes. This reinterpretation of Article IV does not reflect the letter or the spirit of the NPT and challenges the credibility of the Treaty regime including that of comprehensive safeguards.

This has especially made clear when NNWS are faced with additional pressures aiming at the imposition of more commitments on them in the area of safeguards. These Commitments are neither obligatory nor related to the provisions of the Treaty. These efforts undermine and distract from work dedicated to the realization of the universality of the Comprehensive Safeguards System.

Egypt hopes that the current review cycle will succeed in constructively and successfully addressing the aforementioned challenges in order to strengthen the NPT and ensure its continued ability to deal with them effectively.