Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Hesham Badr
Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Organizations and Multilateral Affairs of The Arab Republic of Egypt

Before
The Second Session of the Preparatory Committee to the 2015 NPT Review Conference

General Debate

Geneva, April 23rd 2013
Mr. Chairman,
Let me at the outset congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of the second session of the preparatory committee of the 2015 Review conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We fully trust in your ability to preside over this meeting and we look forward to your conclusions that would reflect the proceedings of this important meeting.

Mr. Chairman,
Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered by Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the statement by Tunisia on behalf of the Arab Group and the statement by Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda coalition.

Mr. Chairman,
As we start the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, the question most relevant to our discussions is what is the real utility of these meetings? Do we come to the NPT Review Conferences and its preparatory committees to discuss issues related to the treaty and reach consensus on decisions, resolutions, undertakings and practical steps to implement them or do we take them with the intention of ignoring them at the end of these meetings with impunity after having been agreed by consensus? I am afraid that the record shows that on balance the latter prevails.

Given the situation, it indeed important to go back to basics; that is the original package of the NPT and its regime, or if you will the Grand Bargain of 1968. The NPT was original set up as nuclear-weapon States committing themselves to nuclear disarmament, in return for which non-nuclear-weapon States undertaking not to develop nuclear weapons, while in endorsing this agreement, all States Parties affirmed the inalienable right to pursue the peaceful application of nuclear energy. So let us assess where we are from this grand bargain.

Mr. Chairman,
The peaceful applications of nuclear energy have been expanding since 1968. More states have been making use of nuclear energy
whether in power generation, in medical applications or for other uses. More countries are posed to establish or expand peaceful nuclear applications in the coming years and decades. This was done, among other things, with the help of the International Atomic Energy Agency that continues to be the Agency responsible for multilateral cooperation in this field. However, resources directed towards technical cooperation remain limited, thus not allowing all countries - especially developing countries - to fulfill their potential for the development of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. This is not for the lack of resources, as the Agency have seen expansion in the resources directed to other functions, functions that are important but by no means more important than technical cooperation.

Moreover, the governing of the Agency remains uneven. Many regions remain under-represented in the board of governance of the Agency, despite the decision that was taken in 1999 to expand the board of Governance to better represent the world community.

Mr Chairman,
Horizontal nuclear non-proliferation is indeed the most achieved part of the Grand Bargain. Not only has the membership of the treaty expanded to include almost all the countries in the world as non-nuclear weapon States, but those non-nuclear weapon States have for the most part are fulfilling their obligations under a clear verification regime enshrined in the comprehensive safeguard agreements. Some countries have even voluntarily taken extra obligations with the additional protocols. This is not to deny that there were some challenges to the horizontal non-proliferation commitments. But it remains a fact that the great majority of the members of the NPT have kept their horizontal non-proliferation commitments. There is of course notable exceptions, and these exceptions need to be addressed in order to reach a universally adhered to NPT, and with countries currently outside this regime joining the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States and placing their nuclear facilities under IAEA verification.

Vertical proliferation, however, remains a serious challenge. Not all of the five nuclear weapon States have committed to decreasing their
arsenals. On the contrary, all of the nuclear weapon states continue to modernize their weapons-related facilities, arsenals and/or the means of delivery. Moreover, nuclear sharing remains in place, with the deployment of nuclear weapons on the territories of non-nuclear weapon States. This is indeed a violation of letter of articles 1 and 2 of the NPT, let alone the spirit of the treaty. To truly label non-proliferation a success, the issue of vertical proliferation and nuclear sharing must be fully addressed and actionable steps should be implemented.

Mr. Chairman,
While peaceful application of nuclear power and nuclear non-proliferation can be described as mostly positive, the nuclear disarmament - a key foundation of the Treaty - remains an ultimate disappointment. Despite years of declaring nuclear disarmament as the top priority of the disarmament agenda, little can be shown in terms of concrete steps to achieve this objective. Article VI of the Treaty clearly says that each party of the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament. Forty five years after the conclusion of this treaty such a multilateral negotiation did not start. In the meantime, we have agreed in the NPT review conference on the decision on the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament of 1995, the thirteen practical steps for the systemic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the Treaty of 2000, the twenty two actions on nuclear disarmament 2010, and yet not much had materialized in advancing the cause of nuclear disarmament.

Instead, we are told that many efforts have been done to reduce nuclear arsenals through unilateral or bilateral initiatives and that the five nuclear weapon States have started a dialogue. Those are welcomed developments. But they are by no means a multilateral, legally binding and verifiable regime to achieve a nuclear disarmament. And let me remind the nuclear weapon States that the consequences of nuclear weapons, including the humanitarian consequences, do not stop at borders but they are a matter of threat to everyone and consequently it is the concern of the whole humanity to usher nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapon States indeed say
that they do recognize the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, but the question that awaits a satisfactory reply is what has been done to remove those weapons.

On the contrary, not only do nuclear weapons continue to exist in the arsenals of nuclear weapon States, but they also continue to be an integral part of the military doctrines, postures and/or policies of those countries and the military alliances they belong to, that is consecrating their existence. We are told that such weapons are need for the security of their citizenry and that the current conditions are not ripe to get rid of nuclear weapons. Such arguments not only run contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Treaty but they are unhelpful if our objective is to rid humanity of nuclear weapons and the threat it posses to humanity. Indeed, history have shown us that as long as nuclear weapons exist for some countries, others will stop at nothing to acquire them and that the only true guarantee that nuclear weapons is never used is their total elimination. And let me be clear, there is no such thing as nuclear weapon in good hands versus nuclear weapons in bad hands. It is a bad weapon in any hand. It has to be eliminated from all hands.

Mr. Chairman,
The above assessment shows that the achievements of the three pillars of the NPT have been uneven. A building that arises with uneven pillars is at best deformed, at worst unsustainable. This is why we need to restore the balance among addressing the issues related to the pillars of the treaty. We need to restore the balance between the responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear weapon States on the one hand and those for the non-nuclear weapon States on the other. We also need to restore the balance between the level of obligations of the non-nuclear weapon States and those for the nuclear weapon States, with the earlier being legally binding and the later to be implemented if convenient. This imbalance is not sustainable.

Mr. Chairman,
The biggest dismay yet relates to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the history of this issue, considered by many as
the fourth pillar of the NPT, has been one of unfulfilled commitment after the other. Egypt and many Arab countries have joined the NPT with the understanding that this would lead to a Middle East completely free of nuclear weapons. However, more than thirty years later, one country in the Middle East - namely Israel - remains outside the NPT.

The issue of the Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was forever enshrined into the NPT with the 1995 NPT Extension and Review Conference. The indefinite extension of the Treaty without a vote was made possible with the adoption of the Resolution on the Middle East. Since then the Arab countries continued to engage positively in the NPT regime while advocating the implementation of the resolution, and Egypt was part of the New Agenda Coalition that was instrumental in ushering the success of the 2000 Review Conference. However, little was done to implement the Resolution on the Middle East for fifteen years. Going into the 2010 NPT Review Conference, it is common knowledge that the success of that Review Conference - after the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference - depended on agreeing on a steps to begin implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

The 2010 Review Conference endorsed practical steps towards the full implementation of the 1995 Middle East resolution. This included holding a Conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction and the appointment of a facilitator to support the implementation of the Resolution including undertaking preparations for convening the Conference.

However, instead of immediately working on implementing such steps, more than a year passed before a facilitator was nominated and a host government was selected. Then, and despite the positive engagement of the Arab group with the facilitator and the announcement of all the countries of the region, with the exception of only Israel, that they will participate in the 2012 Conference, the co-conveners unilaterally and without consultation with the countries in the region announcement the postponement of the Conference. This
postponement constitutes a breach of the commitments agreed to in the 2010 Action Plan. No new date for the Conference has been announced till now despite the arduous calls to implement what was clearly agreed to.

The continued lack of any movement towards the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction raises serious questions regarding the steps that are agreed to and commitments made; whether those agreements and commitments are made in good faith to be implemented or only to ensure the "success" of a meeting with no intention to keep them.

Furthermore, the Arab Spring launched an era of sweeping changes in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, with the people rising demands for a stronger voice in their own governance. Arab governments are becoming more accountable to their people and foreign policy is becoming in line with domestic aspirations and a reflection of popular demands. The Arab street is already aware of the nuclear file in the Middle East and the current situation is unsustainable and this has to be addressed immediately. We reiterate the responsibility of the co-conveners, the United Nations Secretary General together with three cosponsors of the 1995 Middle East Resolution, to fulfill their mandate in convening the postponed conference without any further delay. This is not the demand of the Egypt or the Arab group alone but rather the collective will of the parties to the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,
We attend this meeting to seek a way that would guarantee the full implementation of commitments of the three pillars of the Treaty and the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.