Statement by

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Before

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

Cluster II specific issues: Regional issues, including with respect to the Middle East and implementation of the 1995 Middle East Resolution

Geneva, April 29th 2013  
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Mr. Chairman,
We have listened with interest to the report of the facilitator on the full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and we thank him for his diligent efforts. We have also listened to the statements delivered here today on what we consider the fourth pillar of the NPT; that is the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the establishment of such a zone has become enshrined in the NPT as it was, to use the language of the 2010 NPT Action Plan, as "an essential element of the 1995 Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995".

Mr. Chairman,
Egypt has accompanied the instrument of ratification in 1981 a declaration outlining the grounds upon which it decided to ratify the NPT. In the last paragraph it clearly said:

"In conclusion, Egypt wishes to point out that it has ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, out of strong belief that this step complies with its supreme national interests, provided the Treaty succeeds in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world, particularly in the Middle East, which should remain completely free of nuclear weapons, if it is to contribute constructively to peace, security and prosperity for its people and the world at large."

Since the ratification in 1981, no steps were taken to achieve this objective until the 1995 Resolution was unanimously adopted within the package of the indefinite extension of the Treaty. At the time, we took the commitment of the depository states, which were the cosponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution, very seriously and were ready to engage in the process that would lead to the establishment of that zone. However, another fifteen years elapsed until the 2010 NPT Review Conference succeeded in adopting the Action Plan and the practical steps to be taken for the establishment of the Middle East zone.

We have fully engaged and cooperated with the facilitator and the conveners for over a year and presented them with an Arab working paper entailing our vision concerning all procedural and substantive issues. The response we got for this engagement was the announcement of the unilateral postponement of the Conference to a non-specified future date without even consulting with the states of the region. This followed the expressed commitment of all but
one country in the Middle East to attend such a conference. We reject the
excuses that were given. The postponement was a flagrant non-fulfillment of
agreed commitments. Indeed, it is yet another step in a long history of
unimplemented decisions regarding the establishment of a zone free of
nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,
It is no secret that we took the decision on attending this meeting only few
days before the beginning of the Prepcom. I think it is also no secret that
there was serious debate within the Arab Group on whether we should be
attending this meeting in the first place. We decided to attend this meeting to
engage and listen. We also came with a strong and coherent message. This
message is simply that we will not renegotiate the 2010 Action Plan. We are
keen on implementing what the NPT community agreed upon by consensus.
The conveners had no authority to postpone the Conference that the NPT
Prepcom agreed to, a fact that was clearly stated by one of the co-conveners
themselves, and I take this opportunity to appreciate the strong stance taken
by Russia in support of the legitimacy of NPT through the implementation
of the concrete actions decided in 2010. There was an exact date in the 2010
Action plan that was not met and we insist now on an exact date to be set for
convening the conference. Once that date is set, discussions on all proposals
and modalities regarding holding the Conference should proceed as quickly
as possible.

Mr. Chairman,
Egypt strongly supports the NPT regime. It has always championed the
cause of a nuclear weapon free world. However, the establishment of a
Middle East nuclear weapon free zone is essential for our national interest.
We cannot wait forever for the launching of a process that would lead to the
establishment of this zone, a process that was repeatedly committed to
within the NPT. We cannot continue to attend meetings and agree on
outcomes that do not get implemented, yet to be expected to abide by the
concessions we gave for this outcome.

Mr. Chairman,
The Arab Summit resolution in March 2012 has clearly indicated that the
Arab countries will review their position vis-à-vis the non-implementation of
the Action Plan. In light of the above, Egypt has decided to withdraw from
the rest of the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the NPT
Review Conference right after this statement, to protest this unacceptable and continuous failure to implement the 1995 Middle East Resolution.

The breach of the 2010 Action Plan's clear decision to hold a Conference in 2012 is yet another failure to implement a key NPT commitment. Egypt's withdrawal from the second prepcom aims to send a strong message of dissatisfaction with the lack of seriousness in dealing with the issue of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons, a central component of regional, Arab and Egyptian national security, which impacts directly international peace and security. As a strong supporter of the NPT regime, Egypt is very concerned about the ramification of the non-fulfillment of commitments on the credibility and sustainability of the NPT regime, which was indefinitely extended based on the 1995 Middle East Resolution.

I repeat at the end of this statement that we cannot wait forever for this resolution to be implemented. The NPT members, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the NPT community at large, should all bear their responsibility in this regard to uphold international legitimacy.

Thank you Mr. Chairman