Statement by

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Arab Republic of Egypt

The First Session of the Preparatory Committee to the
2020 NPT Review Conference

Cluster II.
Nuclear Nonproliferation and Safeguards

Vienna, May 2017  Check against delivery
Mr. Chairman,

The nonproliferation of nuclear weapons remains a critical challenge for international security. Although the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has served as the legal and normative foundation for limiting the spread of nuclear weapons since its entry into force, international peace and security continues to be at risk. Nuclear weapons exist today in thousands, a disturbing and sinister reality which the founders of the NPT would not have possibly anticipated, that 49 years after concluding the Treaty, the world continues to be at threatened from the most destructive weapons ever created by mankind.

While the NPT has significantly limited the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, it has nevertheless been deficient in addressing their vertical proliferation. Total and irreversible nuclear disarmament remains the only guarantee for the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. We cannot address nonproliferation without highlighting the immediate connectivity with disarmament. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their proliferation will linger. Accordingly, my delegation would like to emphasize that nuclear non-proliferation must be pursued in all its aspects and that efforts aimed at preventing non-proliferation must be parallel to simultaneous efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament. Egypt strongly believes that efforts by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons should be undertaken in a transparent, irreversible, and internationally verifiable manner, as such steps will highly reduce any likelihood of their proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt views with serious concern the readiness by some NPT State Parties, particularly nuclear weapon States, to cooperate with States non-Party to the NPT in the nuclear field. Rather than exert efforts to encourage and promote universal adherence to the NPT and reinforce the global nuclear nonproliferation regime, it is regrettable that some state parties are engaging in cooperative exchanges and offering assistance in the field of nuclear technology to States that have snubbed the NPT. By doing so, these state parties not only send a misguided message of their willingness to cooperate with states non-party to the NPT, they also weaken the incentive for these states to join the Treaty and reduce the prospect of achieving its universality.

My delegation takes this opportunity therefore, to call upon all State Parties to the NPT engaged in such cooperative exchanges to reconsider such an approach with a view to halt such exchanges, and calls upon all states non-party to the NPT to accede to the Treaty at the earliest date, particularly those States that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, in order to maximize their benefits from cooperation in the nuclear field under the authority and guidance of the NPT.
We emphasize that strict observance of and adherence to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards and to the NPT should be a condition for any cooperation in the nuclear field with states non-party to the Treaty, or for any supply arrangements with these States for the transfer of source or special fissible material, equipment, or material.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the ceaseless calls over decades to the nuclear weapon States to realize the total and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons, regrettably, they continue to exist with astounding numbers. The lack of commitment by NWS to implement Article VI of the NPT with good faith however, isn’t the only deficiency. Disturbingly, nuclear weapons remain deployed in the territories of certain non-Nuclear Weapon States and nuclear deterrence continues to dominate the security and defense doctrines of certain military alliances. These actions have severely undermined the credibility of the NPT and its integrity.

Let us be clear; any horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapon sharing arrangements by States Parties to the Treaty constitutes a clear violation of non-proliferation obligations undertaken by nuclear weapon States under Article I and by non-Nuclear Weapon States under Article II of the Treaty. Such arrangements puts the effectiveness and credibility of the Treaty into question. While some State Parties to the NPT label the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons as a priority in national security, they act with indifference when it comes to nuclear sharing arrangements. We urge State Parties that engage in nuclear-weapon sharing arrangements to put an end to such engagements under any circumstances and any kind of security arrangements, including in the framework of military alliances.

Mr. Chairman,

While Egypt believes that constructive and practical efforts should be maintained globally to ensure the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, and guarantee that every effort is made to implement the NPT in all its aspects, we nevertheless underline that such efforts should in no way obstruct the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy by States Parties to the Treaty, as clearly stated in Decision 2 on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

Egypt refuses any attempts that impose restrictions or limitations on the transfer of nuclear equipment, material, and technology to States parties to the Treaty that have concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We believe that the obligation under Article III of the NPT in verifying the peaceful nature of nuclear programs provides enough credible assurances that would enable States parties to engage in the transfer of nuclear equipment, material, and technology for
peaceful purposes in accordance with Article IV of the Treaty. Efforts that aim to obstruct the transfer of nuclear equipment, material, and technology contravenes with the principles and spirit of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt recognizes that the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards are a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, play a crucial role in the implementation of the Treaty, and help create an environment conducive to nuclear cooperation. We underline that the IAEA is the sole competent authority responsible for verification of the fulfillment of safeguard obligations assumed by States parties under the NPT. We stress the importance of the IAEA safeguards agreements and urge all States that have not yet done so, to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements as soon as possible, in order to consolidate the verification system for the non-proliferation regime. Nothing should be done to undermine the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency in this regard.

My delegation however, would like to underscore that while ensuring the peaceful nature of nuclear programs is imperative, it is important nonetheless to make a clear distinction between the legal obligations stipulated in the NPT and other voluntary, optional confidence building measures undertaken by a state party to the NPT. Such voluntary undertakings shall not be turned into legal safeguards obligations. We believe that it is the sovereign prerogative of any state to conclude any additional measures and that comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA are sufficient and appropriate enough to enable the IAEA with its verification tasks.

Furthermore, we call on nuclear weapon States to conclude full-scope safeguards agreements with the IAEA in accordance with its statute, for verifying the fulfillment of their obligations assumed under the NPT. We stress the statutory role of IAEA in nuclear disarmament, including applying safeguards on nuclear materials derived from the dismantling of nuclear weapons. We emphasize that the work of the Agency with regard to safeguards and verification has to be conducted in accordance with the provisions of its statute and safeguards agreements.

Mr. Chairman,

The nuclear nonproliferation regime would be greatly reinforced with universal adherence to the NPT. Egypt calls upon all States non-Party to the NPT to accede immediately and without preconditions to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states and to place all their nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. By achieving the universality of the NPT, the objectives and principles of the Treaty become strengthened. We reaffirm the importance of Decision 2 of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference which stipulates that universal adherence to the Treaty is an
urgent priority. As universal adherence to any Treaty is a reflection of its credibility and validity, the international community should therefore, redouble its efforts to exert pressure on those remaining States that have rejected the NPT in an effort to strengthen its objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt reaffirms that the strict observance of all the provisions of the NPT remains central to achieving the shared objectives of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, preventing, under any circumstances, the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, and preserving the Treaty's vital contribution to peace and security.

Thank you.