Statement of

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before

Main Committee III

Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Mr. Chairman,

The right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as I am sure you are aware, is an inalienable right of all states parties to the NPT in accordance with Article IV of the treaty. Furthermore, the issue of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy has gained added importance over the last few years due to the launching of ambitious nuclear energy programs by several countries including Egypt.

The attractiveness of nuclear energy, in light of the ongoing energy crisis, as well as other factors such as the threat posed by global warming, is undeniable. Nuclear energy has the potential to fuel the rapidly expanding energy needs of both developed and developing countries. The increasing role of other peaceful nuclear applications in the fields of health, food, agriculture, water resources management, is another proof for the potential contribution that nuclear applications can make in support of the global and national efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Here Egypt recalls that Paragraph II of Article IV of the NPT calls on states parties to facilitate the exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and other information regarding nuclear energy with consideration to the needs of the developing world.

It is therefore vital that this Review Conference determine concrete steps to implement the obligations of states parties to the NPT to facilitate the exercise of the inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through the promotion and expansion of cooperation between states parties, as well as strengthening the IAEA’s role in technical cooperation, and the provision of adequate funding for the Agency’s activities in this regard.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the NPT is a politically oriented framework allowing States Parties to benefit to the fullest extent from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy while implementing their NPT-based obligations. The NPT does not impose any obligations in the areas of safety, security, transport, or liability, and is not a forum where such technical issues can be discussed. Such issues are being deliberated extensively within specialized fora. NPT States Parties may, where appropriate, take note of such deliberations without, however, engaging the NPT in areas that lie beyond its purview.
Mr. Chairman,

Egypt recalls that the 2000 Review Conference recognized that the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is a fundamental objective of the NPT. The Conference noted that this right helps to address technological and economic gaps between the developed and developing countries. In addition, it urged that preferential treatment be granted to the non-nuclear weapons states with special regard to developing countries’ needs.

This is what the NPT States have decided in its previous Review Conference. It is therefore with great regret that we are witnessing attempts to restrict the exercise of states parties of their inalienable right through selective considerations as a precondition for nuclear cooperation. Furthermore, Egypt views with concern initiatives related to multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle which contain inherent restrictions on the right of states to develop a full nuclear fuel cycle, an option which Egypt believes should be exercised in accordance with state’s national and sovereign decisions.

Egypt’s concerns are compounded when these preconditions and added obligations requested of non-nuclear weapons states are completely ignored upon entering into new agreements with states that are not even party to the NPT and who have not even accepted full scope comprehensive IAEA Safeguards. This establishes a double standard that imposes additional demands on states parties, and rewards states that are non-parties to the Treaty. Egypt recalls paragraph 12 of the Decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference on the Principles and Objectives of the Treaty that states that “new supply arrangements for the transfer of source or special fissionable material or equipment or material especially designed or prepared for the processing, use, or production of special fissionable material to non-nuclear weapons states should require, as a necessary preconditions, acceptance of the Agency’s full -scope safeguards and internationally legally binding commitments not to acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.”

Our concerns are further compounded by attempts to restrict the right of withdrawal from the Treaty, a right guaranteed by Article X of the NPT, as well as international law. Unfortunately, these attempts, which perceive withdrawal from
the NPT as being a threat to International peace and security, fail to perceive non-
adherence to the NPT as posing a similar threat, even though in fact the latter may
at times constitute an even greater thereat to International peace and security. It is
perhaps not a coincidence that calls to impose selective considerations as a
precondition for nuclear cooperation, and calls to restrict the right of withdrawal
emanate from the same sources.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt reaffirms its commitment to work with you and all states parties to
achieve the success of this committee and of this Conference as a whole. We
remain steadfast in our commitment to all three pillars of the Treaty, and we
especially hope to benefit from the opportunities afforded by the NPT in the field
of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Thank you.