

ISRAEL

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Check Against Delivery

**Statement by
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all disarmament and international
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Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on assuming the position of chair of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you steer our deliberations forward towards a successful outcome.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel has consistently maintained that arms control and other security issues must be realistically addressed while considering regional context. In particular, the political reality in our region requires a practical, step-by-step approach. Comprehensive and durable peace and stability in the Middle East is essential in this respect. The foundations for such a future must be based on historic reconciliation, mutual trust and respect, safe and recognized borders and good neighborliness. Effective arms control measures can only be achieved and sustained in a region in which war, armed conflict, terrorism, political hostility, incitement and non-recognition cease to be features of everyday life.

The achievement of a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors should be accompanied by confidence building measures and arrangements regarding conventional weapons, culminating in the eventual establishment of the Middle East as a mutually verifiable zone free of ballistic missiles and of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. This zone should emanate from, and encompass all the states in the region, by virtue of free and direct negotiations amongst them.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is our policy to support, and wherever possible, to join those arms control and other international treaties that do not undermine Israel's narrow margin for security. In this context, I would like to reiterate my government's unequivocal support for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Israel has continuously demonstrated its support for the CTBT, including our active participation in the many activities of the Preparatory Commission. At the same time, we must bridge several gaps as we strive to move expeditiously towards CTBT's entry into force, including, *inter alia*, the need for universal commitment not to carry out any nuclear test explosion and any other nuclear explosions; efforts to complete the CTBT's verification regime; and the need to complete all International Monitoring System stations, with a special emphasis on current gaps, especially in the Middle East region.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel attaches great importance to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We consider the prohibition of nuclear testing an indispensable element of this regime, especially in view of non-compliance and the cases of gross violations of international obligations related to nonproliferation in the Middle East, as well as the two nuclear explosions conducted by North Korea.

UNSCR 1887 reaffirms the need for all Member States to fulfill their obligations in relation to arms control and disarmament and to prevent proliferation in all its aspects of all weapons of mass destruction. This is of particular importance to the Middle East, where most of the cases of NPT non-compliance have occurred. In addition, the present situation — where ongoing IAEA investigations on suspected cases of non-compliance in countries that have not provided satisfactory explanations — casts a shadow on the integrity of the entire non-proliferation regime.

The development of a nuclear weapons program by Iran poses an enormous threat to the stability of the Middle East and to global peace and security. The possibility that terrorists would enjoy an Iranian nuclear umbrella or that they would actually receive nuclear weapons from the Iranian regime is a very real threat. Iran's hostile policies and statements, its aggressive pursuit of missile technology and its active involvement in support of terrorism gravely exacerbate the situation in our region. Israel, in particular, has consistently been the target of Iran's vicious anti-Semitic campaign, notably statements made by Iran's president calling for the destruction of Israel.

As recently stated by Prime Minister Netanyahu in his speech before the General Assembly, the greatest challenge the international community faces is to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons. We are convinced that without halting the Iranian nuclear program, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to promote an international agenda aimed at strengthening the prevailing non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chairperson,

The confrontations between Israel and the Hizbullah during the Second Lebanon War in 2006, as well as between Israel and Hamas during operation Cast Lead at the outset of 2009, have demonstrated the firm connections between Iran, the major terrorist-sponsoring state of our age, and its proxies. These two terrorist organizations not only possessed MANPADS, UAVs, missiles of various types and ranges as well as very short range rockets, provided in abundance by Iran but were also willing to use them against civilian population.

The transfers of arms from Iran and Syria to Hizbullah have continued unabated during the last few years, thus in non-compliance with UNSCR 1701, as well as UNSCRs 1737, 1747 and 1803. In addition, transfers of arms, ammunitions and weapon components to the hands of Hamas in the Gaza Strip continue on a daily basis, in contravention with UNSCR 1860 and despite international efforts to prevent and interdict these illicit transfers.

It is Israel's view that the prevention of transfers of arms to terrorists should be addressed as a matter of high priority by the international community, and that a clear norm banning such transfers should be created with a demand for concrete steps to be taken against its continuation. In our view, nothing can justify the practice of certain states condemning terrorism and at the same time condoning the transfer of arms to terrorist groups.

Mr. Chairperson,

Given the global realities, the renewal of interest in nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must be accompanied by extensive efforts aimed at ensuring that such programs will not be misused for proliferation purposes, in light of the fact that the characteristics of these technologies are inherently dual-use in their nature. Particular care should be taken in volatile areas such as the Middle East.

Indeed, we attach great importance to the prevention of non-conventional weapons proliferation as well as the unauthorized transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use items. Israel has taken extensive efforts to adhere to and implement all of the export control regimes. The Israeli Export Control laws and regulations ensure robust control over exports and meet the standards and criteria as set by the NSG, AG, MTCR Regimes and the Wassenaar Arrangement.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel shares the concern of the international community pertaining to the need to strengthen the safety and security of nuclear materials and facilities and to prevent illicit trafficking of such materials. In this spirit, we have joined the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials (CPPNM). We have also signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and are preparing for its ratification. We have joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), the Container Security Initiative (CSI), the US Megaport Initiative, the Second-Line Defence Initiative (SLD) and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI). Israel participates in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) activities. We support President Obama's initiative for an international effort to improve security for vulnerable nuclear materials and will participate in the Global Nuclear Security summit.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel supports the ongoing negotiations on cluster munitions within the framework of the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention. The CCW is widely acknowledged as the most relevant and professional forum to address issues within the field of conventional weapons. Unlike other initiatives, these negotiations that are carried out with the participation of all major producers and stockpilers of cluster munitions have a real chance of creating a process which will make a real humanitarian difference on the ground.

We trust and hope that states that have pledged their support to other initiatives will continue their constructive participation in the CCW, and that CCW Member States will opt for the continuation of these negotiations in this year's conference of States Parties.

Mr. Chairperson,

This year, two rounds of the Open Ended Working Group on an Arms Trade Treaty ("ATT") have taken place. It is Israel's view that the negotiations could eventually lead to the creation of a good instrument, provided that the following principals are accepted by all states negotiating:

- An ATT should opt for high standards on export control rather than settling for the lowest common denominator;
- An ATT should include measures in order to combat arms transfers to terrorists;
- The decisions on arms export must remain under the full responsibility and a sovereign consideration of states.

Mr. Chairperson,

Illicit trade in conventional arms has severe destabilizing effects and humanitarian consequences and is a threat to international peace and security. Israel welcomes the successful outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) on the Programme of Action held in July 2008 and is looking forward to the upcoming BMS in 2010 and the subsequent meeting of Experts in 2011 and their successful outcome. We are ready to play our part and engage constructively with other Member States to contribute to the success of these meetings and for a successful Review Conference in 2012. This success will be yet another step to prevent the transfer of arms to terrorists and reduce the human suffering caused by this phenomenon.

Mr. Chairperson,

For many years, we witness in different fora politically motivated proposals for agenda items which are designed either to single out the State of Israel, or to divert attention from violations and real issues of non-compliance by certain Middle East states. In our view, recent events at the IAEA General Conference highlight the need of direct and constructive dialogue between the parties concerned on resolutions on the Middle East. While the parties may disagree on the road leading to a shared regional vision, without common understanding on this matter, progressions will be practically impossible.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, Israel will continue to contribute to the global non-proliferation regime, through its policy of responsible behavior and restraint in the nuclear domain, and in the enhancement of norms aimed at preventing arms from reaching irresponsible and unauthorized hands.

Thank you.