Statement by
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Before
The First Session of the
Preparatory Committee to the 2015
NPT Review Conference

Cluster I issues: Nuclear Disarmament and
Security Assurances

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Egypt's Statement

Before the First Session of the Preparatory Committee
For the 2015 NPT Review Conference
Vienna, 30 April – 11 May 2012

"Cluster I issues" (Nuclear Disarmament)

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament remains one of Egypt’s highest priorities, a priority which we have constantly promoted throughout the different international disarmament fora. We stress our concern at the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, and reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which represents the primary objective of the NPT, is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. This objective is dependent upon the implementation by the nuclear-weapon States of their obligations under Article VI and the achievement of universal adherence to the Treaty. International peace and security can never be attained with the existence of such weapons.

Egypt associates itself with the working papers on nuclear disarmament submitted to this session by the Non-Aligned Movement, New Agenda Coalition and the Arab Group. Indeed, the Arab Group working paper makes several suggestions of which the most important is the immediate commencement of serious negotiations to develop a plan to achieve an overall reduction of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons of all kinds, and to continue to reduce the role of nuclear weapons and their importance in military and security policies.

Whilst significant progress has been made to meet the nuclear non-proliferation objectives of the NPT, limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons
and strengthening non-proliferation measures over the years, the nuclear disarmament side of the NPT bargain, however, has yet to be realised. The international community must therefore redouble its efforts to ensure that the nuclear-weapon States and countries outside the NPT take the requisite steps towards the speedy, total and final elimination of their nuclear weapons. The reaffirmation of the commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons was fundamental to the decision, which was adopted without a vote, to indefinitely extend the NPT in 1995.

The continued possession by nuclear weapon states of nuclear arsenals for deterrence purposes, the development of new generations of such weapons and the provision of assistance to states not party to the Treaty thus perpetuating their non-adherence, as well as the continued deployment of nuclear weapons in territories of non-nuclear weapon States through nuclear sharing arrangements of military alliances, undermines the objectives of the Treaty, and the presumed equality, irrespective of membership in military alliances, among the non-nuclear weapon States.

Mr Chairman,

Egypt expresses deep concern at the continued lack of meaningful progress in the field of nuclear disarmament, which could undermine the object and purpose of the NPT. Egypt reiterates its strong call for a full implementation of the unequivocal undertaking given by the nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 Review Conference, and reaffirmed at the 2010 Review Conference, to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. That undertaking should be demonstrated without further delay through the full implementation of article VI of the Treaty and the outcomes of the 2000 and
2010 Review Conferences, to advance systematically and progressively towards a nuclear-weapon-free world as agreed in 2000 and 2010.

Indeed, the 2000 Review Conference agreed on 13 practical steps and the 2010 Review Conference agreed on an action plan on nuclear disarmament which includes concrete steps for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, Egypt strongly calls for prompt and full implementation of the 2000 and 2010 outcomes.

The negotiations of a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified time frame ending in 2025, including a nuclear weapons convention, is necessary and should commence without any further delay.

Egypt continues to associate itself with the NAM Working Paper on the "Elements for a plan of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons" submitted to the 2010 Review Conference, as contained in document NPT/CONF.2010/WP.47, and calls for its integration into the outcome document of the 2015 Review Process of the Treaty, as well as its speedy and full implementation by the nuclear-weapon States of all its measures in accordance with the proposed timeline and pace that makes up for the time elapsed.

We also remain deeply concerned by the strategic defence doctrines of nuclear-weapon States that set out the rationales for the use of nuclear weapons. These doctrines confirm the continued reliance on nuclear weapons as an integral part of national security, thereby undermining previous commitments made under the NPT. Regrettably, nuclear deterrence policies remain a defining characteristic of the military doctrines of nuclear-weapon States and the military alliances to which they are party.

Egypt emphasizes in particular the prime importance of and the urgent need for full and prompt implementation of the commitments by nuclear-weapon States
under action (5) of the 2010 Review Conference "action plan on nuclear disarmament". In this context, we further recall that nuclear-weapon States committed to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament, inter alia, through:

(a) rapidly moving towards an overall reduction in the global stockpile of all types of nuclear weapons;
(b) addressing the question of all nuclear weapons regardless of their type or their location as an integral part of the general nuclear disarmament process;
(c) further diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies;
(d) discussing policies that could prevent the use of nuclear weapons and eventually lead to their elimination, lessen the danger of nuclear war and contribute to the non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons;
(e) considering the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security;
(f) reducing the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons; and
(g) further enhancing transparency and increase mutual confidence.

Moreover, Egypt calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to submit comprehensive substantive reports about their undertakings under action (5) of the 2010 Review Conference "action plan on nuclear disarmament" to the Preparatory Committee in 2014, in order to enable the 2015 Review Conference to take stock and consider the next steps for the full implementation of article VI of the Treaty in realization of the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Also under the 2010 Action Plan, the nuclear-weapon States were encouraged to agree as soon as possible on a standard reporting form and to determine the appropriate reporting intervals for the purpose of voluntarily providing standard information without prejudice to national security. Furthermore, they were also required to submit regular reports, within the framework of strengthened review
process for the Treaty, on the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan. No evident progress has been made in this regard.

Egypt also recalls that the 2010 Action Plan re-emphasized the commitment to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to nuclear disarmament measures.

Mr Chairman,

Egypt recalls that the 2010 Review Conference reaffirmed and recognized the legitimate interest of all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty in receiving unequivocal and legally binding security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Receiving such security assurances is a legitimate right as well as the security interest of all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty.

Accordingly, we are of the view that pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as the only absolute guarantee against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, nuclear-weapon States should refrain from the threat or use of nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. Egypt reiterates that efforts to conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority and should be materialized without further delay.

In closing, it is important to note that this Review Cycle comes with continued high expectations from peoples around the world to move rapidly towards total nuclear disarmament, thereby enhancing global peace and security.
In this respect, the role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in supporting nuclear disarmament is much appreciated.

Before concluding this statement, Egypt cannot omit to refer to the statement delivered on Wednesday morning by the distinguished representative of Switzerland on behalf of a number of NPT States Parties, including Egypt, on the immense humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. The diversity of States on whose behalf the statement was delivered, as well as their positive respective track records in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, testifies to a growing concern regarding the lack of progress towards the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

Any use of nuclear weapons would have a devastating humanitarian impact and be clearly incompatible with international humanitarian law. Indeed, considering their devastating impact, no distinction can be made between the possession of nuclear weapons on the one hand and their deployment and use on the other.

Egypt therefore urges all NPT States Parties to give serious consideration to the issues raised in the joint statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament delivered on behalf of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, the Holy See, Egypt, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria Norway, the Philippines, South Africa and Switzerland. This statement can only serve to increase our resolve to exert every effort to bring about the full implementation of the NPT, and therefore the full elimination of nuclear weapons at an early date.

Egypt hopes that this first session of the Preparatory Committee succeeds in moving forward with strong determination to achieve tangible outcomes towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.