



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

Helsinki, 7 January 2015

His Excellency

Dr Nabil Elaraby

Secretary-General of the League of Arab States

Excellency,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the facilitator for the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be held in Helsinki, and supported by the co-conveners of the Conference: the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Over the past year, significant progress has been achieved toward holding a Conference attended by all states of the region. Five rounds of informal consultations in Switzerland have allowed the regional states to directly engage on their core interests regarding the Conference, and have narrowed the outstanding issues that have so far prevented the regional states from agreement. It is my understanding that Israel is willing to attend the Conference, as soon as consensus regarding the Conference agenda, elements of a concluding document, and other arrangements is reached among the regional parties.

In view of progress made to date, the co-conveners and I are confident that the remaining key issues can be resolved, and the Conference convened in the near future, provided that the regional states reach agreement on the arrangements of the Conference. The co-conveners remain committed to convening the Conference as soon as the regional states have reached this agreement, and the Government of Finland is ready to host the Conference on a short notice once convened.



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In order to facilitate the necessary agreement, the co-conveners and I will host a drafting session in Geneva on January 25-26 to address the outstanding issues, and seek agreement on the modalities for the Conference. We encourage all regional states to attend that meeting, and to express their views. In the interest of productivity of this drafting session, the participation by senior representatives empowered to conclude agreements ad referendum would be welcome.

In reference to your December 9 request for the “positions of other regional parties, namely Israel and Iran”, I would like to inform you that I have conveyed your request to the Governments concerned. Both states have of course made their positions known on a range of outstanding issues during the earlier phases of the consultation process. The suggested drafting session in Geneva would provide an additional opportunity for all to present their current positions in greater detail.

The co-conveners and I would very much appreciate the continued support and encouragement to the ongoing efforts by the Arab League Foreign Ministers. The historic opportunity to launch a process so important for peace, security and cooperation in the Middle East should not be lost.

I would kindly ask you to share this letter with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the League of Arab States.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,



Jaakko Laajava

Under-Secretary of State

Facilitator