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### ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

#### Letter dated 13 June 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to your note DDA/12-85/ME of 27 March 1985 in which you inquired about my Government's views regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Israel has consistently supported resolutions at the United Nations aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In keeping with its policy, Israel once again joined the consensus on this issue during the thirty-ninth session in order to stress its whole-hearted support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Israel has reservations regarding the modalities envisaged in resolution 39/54 of 12 December 1984. It believes that the modalities that led to the conclusion of the Treaty of Tlatelolco should serve as the most effective way to achieve a similar goal in the Middle East. Accordingly, Israel has always maintained and frequently proposed that:

1. The initiative for the establishment of such a zone should originate with the States in question;
2. The consultations necessary for reaching this objective should be carried out directly among them;

\* A/40/50/Rev.1.

3. The negotiations between the States in the region should address themselves to the modalities for the establishment of the zone, the obligations and rights of the contracting States, the machinery and other procedures for ensuring the effective compliance by States with the obligations undertaken by them, as well as other means for averting proliferation, as agreed by the negotiating States.

Israel's vision of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is consistent with the recommendations of various groups of distinguished experts from countries representing different political backgrounds. In this context, let me recall some of the most notable instances.

The group of experts from 21 nations who studied all the aspects of nuclear-weapon-free zones submitted a report in 1975 that was reproduced in document A/10027/Add.1. In paragraph 90 of this report, the experts listed several principles governing the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, one of them being "the initiative for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone [which] should come from States within the region concerned, and participation must be voluntary".

This principle also represents one of the basic ideas of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, known also as the Palme Commission. Paragraph 5.3 of its report, reproduced in document A/CN.10/38 of 8 April 1983, stated explicitly:

"The Commission believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States in the region or subregion concerned, constitutes an important step towards non-proliferation, common security and disarmament."

A similar approach was also advocated by the non-aligned countries. A working paper submitted by them under agenda item 4 of the 1983 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/45) and reproduced in annex V of document A/38/42, stated:

"The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world on the basis of agreements and/or arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned should be encouraged, with the ultimate objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons."

It is thus generally recognized that within the purview of the regional approach to disarmament, there is considerable scope for regional initiatives and practical action through negotiations between the States of the region. These principles are also consistent with the regional measures that have been adopted so far, particularly the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Resolution 39/54, though designed to attain the same aim of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, omits mention of the direct negotiating process between the States of the region without which such an arrangement is unlikely to come about. Therefore, our serious reservations of past years remain in force as to the ways and means proposed in resolution 39/54 for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 52 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Benjamin NETANYAHU  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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