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**Statement by
Heidar Ali Balouji
First Counselor of the Permanent Mission
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN
On
Core Obligations**

**Before the Third Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a
Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of
Mass Destruction
New York, 14-18 November 2022**

In the Name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Madam President,

Thank you very much for preparing a comprehensive and comparative concept note on core obligations of the treaty to be elaborated for the Middle East zone free of WMDs which is shared with my capital for further consideration. Under core obligations we discuss mainly the prohibitions that we have identified last year. Following the discussions in the previous session of the Conference in which the core obligations of the treaty were discussed, it seems that it is agreeable for all the Members of the Conference that the scope of the treaty should cover all WMDs, namely, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; though the type and extent of the obligation on each type of these weapons, given their different nature, may vary from one to another, though with many possible commonalities.

We are aware of the fact that the current relevant international instruments tackle a variety of activities. Notably, some of the existing similar treaties have overlooked a comprehensive prohibition. However, we strongly believe that our treaty should never have such shortcomings. Therefore, these prohibitions must include development, production, stockpiling, and use or threat of use of all WMDs. Given the *raison d'être* of the treaty, it is obvious that most of these prohibitions imply and include some other aspects. For example, the prohibition of development shall apply to research activities as well. In the same vein, the prohibition of production addresses and encompasses testing. Furthermore, transit, transfer, receipt, deployment, and stationing activities all fall under the prohibition of stockpiling.

These prohibitions must be applicable inside the designated territories and under the jurisdiction of the regional parties through the implementation of the treaty that will have mechanisms of verification and control to enforce its obligations. In this regard, it is also recognized as such by the [General Assembly of the United Nations](#).

The general obligations can also be listed in detail, and they will be comprised as follows:

- Not to research, develop, manufacture, stockpile, acquire, possess or have any control over any NBC weapon or other nuclear explosive device;
- Not to seek or receive assistance in any of the above;
- Not to assist in or encourage such actions;
- The transit, receipt, storage, stockpiling, installation, or another form of possession of any nuclear weapon or nuclear explosive device on the territory of the member states are not allowed;
- Each party pledges not to carry out NBC weapon tests or any other nuclear explosion and prevent any such explosion at any place under its control;
- Within a specific timeline and before the adoption of the treaty in a diplomatic conference, the participating states should agree to conclude with the [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) and enforce the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement before the treaty enters into force. A similar approach with the OPCW and the BWC implementing unit should be considered and applied;
- The Members of the Conference must also introduce and undertake the avoidance of providing a source or any special fissionable material or related equipment to any non-nuclear-weapon state (NNWS) that has not concluded an IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement;
- Further, the states should agree to maintain physical protection of nuclear material, facilities, and equipment that are at least as effective as outlined in the IAEA recommendations and guidelines;
- The treaty does not affect the rights and obligations of the parties under other international treaties concluded before the entry into force of the treaty;
- The treaty should also require Members of the treaty to prohibit and prevent in their respective the diversion of nuclear, chemical, and biological materials for prohibited military purposes.
- The treaty's provisions should be non-discriminatory and provide the same rights and obligations to each of its Members.

It is noteworthy that the treaty should have other integral parts enshrining the rights and responsibilities of the Members of the Conference. Among others, the inalienable right to use related technology for peaceful purposes as well as receiving legally binding negative security assurances with the details thereof can be assumed as part of core obligations envisaged in the treaty. In this context, a Protocol as an annex of the treaty must be signed and implemented by all nuclear-weapon States, including, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In closing, given the importance of the task and the necessity of a complicated but delicate balance, it should be highlighted that the suggested elements are not exhaustive and to realize a comprehensive and holistic approach throughout the treaty, including its core obligations, some expert meetings are required to clarify all possible questions with ample time and answers.

I thank you, Madam President.

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**Statement by
Heidar Ali Balouji
First Counselor of the Permanent Mission
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN
On
Conditions to Entry into Force of the Treaty**

**Before the Third Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a
Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of
Mass Destruction
New York, 14-18 November 2022**

In the Name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Madam President,

All parties of a treaty establishing the Middle East Free Zone of WMDs must enter the treaty on an equal footing. This cannot be guaranteed unless all the regional parties enter into and implement the required provisions of the existing relevant treaties and conventions. The Best Time for establishing this situation is before the adoption of the treaty in a diplomatic conference.

Therefore, we believe before the adoption of the treaty, the following should be realized in the field of NBC weapons.

The WMDFZ will require all regional parties to sign and ratify all related conventions and treaties on

banning such weapons, to be implemented sequentially. The first step would be for Israel, the remaining Member of the Conference (MtC), to sign and ratify the NPT, as all other regional countries have already done so. a concerted international political pressure for Israel to disarm is imperative.

There is some proposed technical steps Israel could take to relinquish its nuclear arsenal and join nonproliferation efforts. These steps require Israel to (1) renunciation of possession of WMDs and shut down its Dimona plutonium-production reactor and reprocessing plant; (2) place all nuclear materials and facilities under the IAEA safeguards agreement; (3) dismantle stockpiles of nuclear weapons and fissile materials (separated plutonium and HEU) in collaboration with IAEA and under an agreed schedule; (4) limit the level of uranium enrichment; and (5) begin the official process of joining the NPT as non-nuclear weapons party.

It is worth mentioning that the most possible way to verify compliance with the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is the conclusion and implementation of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. This is a pending issue in our region and despite the frequent request of the IAEA, there are some countries in the region that are yet to materialize this long overdue. This is against the backdrop that decision 2 of the 1995 NPT review conference in paragraph 10 explicitly has required this. When it says, "All States parties required by Article III of the Treaty to sign and bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements and which have not yet done so should do so without delay."

It is regrettable that this point has been left unimplemented in our region and currently there are some countries that have failed to comply with both the 1995 NPT decision as well as the IAEA relevant decisions. In light of this, the CSA is not implemented in some countries but they have started an ambitious

nuclear program the activities of which are not clear for the IAEA and so for the world.

The second step entails the few remaining regional members of the Conference signing and/or ratifying the BWC. The most compelling argument to achieve universalization of the BWC in the region is that biological weapons have limited military use, but the ease of acquisition by non-state actors or terrorists has heightened the need for stronger regulation and oversight. The WMDFZ could achieve increased security measures by enforcing a region-wide ban on the acquisition, development, or use of biological weapons. With increased transparency, verification, and oversight, the prospects will become stronger for regional collaboration in the legitimate peaceful uses of the biological field.

The third step requires regional states to become part of the CWC. Once again, most states in the Middle East have signed and ratified the convention, including the 2013 Syrian accession. The most important impetus for the remaining countries to join and ratify the convention is the fact that the Middle East is the only region since World War II where chemical weapons have been used, and with devastating human cost (Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Syria). With such historical precedents, there is a willingness on the part of all regional countries to see an end to chemical weapons use, production, and stockpiling. Matters have become even more urgent due to the risk of chemical weapons landing in the hands of extremists or terrorists.

The fourth step is to counter WMD trafficking and terrorism by having firm commitments from and implementation by regional countries of a series of resolutions, conventions, and treaties.

The Middle East is rife with conditions for terrorists to take advantage of its instability to acquire, develop,

and use WMD. Terrorism is a common enemy of the region.

I thank you Madam President.

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**Statement by
Heidar Ali Balouji
First Counselor of the Permanent Mission
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN – New York
On
Inalienable Right to Use Technology for Peaceful Purposes and
Unilateral Coercive Measures**

**Before the Third Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a
Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of
Mass Destruction
New York, 14-18 November 2022**

In the Name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Madam President,

The member states of a zone free of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons could have the inalienable right to utilize the corresponding technology and materials only for peaceful purposes by adhering to UN guidelines and practices on the establishment of such a zone.

Additionally, such an assumption is permitted by relying on the present related treaties. Article IV of the NPT, Article X of the BWC, Article XI of the CWC, and comparable provisions in the existing treaties establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons actually support the full realization of the inherent rights of States Parties to develop and use the pertinent technology and material for peaceful purposes.

These provisions serve as a crucial tenet of those agreements. Unquestionably, this can and should be the case with regard to a treaty of such a nature in the Middle East.

We have already described our expectations for the components that such a treaty might have in order to actualize this inalienable right. It should be noted, though, that as the realities reflect, this envisioned right has been struggling mightily with the imposition of unilateral coercive measures by a select group of hostile members of the international community.

The imposing nations' obligations under the relevant Articles of the aforementioned treaties, conventions, and other UN resolutions are obviously violated by these illegal actions against civil projects within developing nations like Iran and others in our region.

Unfortunately, these constraints are being imposed on certain of the parties to the aforementioned treaties and conventions, while non-parties gain access to some member States' cooperation in the nuclear, chemical, and biological fields. The latter nations appear to have forgotten that the enshrined peaceful uses and obligations are a fundamental component of the aforementioned treaties, and that disarmament and non-proliferation obligations have been accepted as a component of a balance that also includes obligations to advance international cooperation.

The UN annual resolution on unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, as detailed in document A/RES/76/191(10 January 2022), is one of the greatest sources applicable to all circumstances for further explanation of the illegality of UCMs.

It has clear provisions *recognizing* that such measures constitute a flagrant violation of the principles of international law as outlined in the Charter, as well as the basic principles of the multilateral trading system in its PP6.

It further in its OP2 *urges* the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral economic, financial, or trade measures that are not authorized by relevant organs of the United Nations, and that is inconsistent with the principles of international law or the Charter of the United Nations or that contravene the basic principles of the multilateral trading system and that affect, in particular, but not exclusively, developing countries.

OP4 of the same resolution calls upon the international community to condemn and reject the imposition of the use of such measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development;

Our stance and point of view are clear and straightforward in this situation. We think that signing a treaty with such wide commitments can and ought to result in adequate gains and returns. We have a legitimate right to anticipate that the treaty will ensure these benefits.

We firmly believe, based on our experience, that acknowledging the inalienable right to peaceful uses does not and will not inevitably result in the actual implementation of those rights. Unless additional action is taken. One of these sensible actions is to reject UCMs in the treaty.

By adopting this position, we do not believe that either a specific chapter should be devoted to the UCMs in the treaty or a dedicated thematic meeting should take place in each session of the Conference. Instead, we believe that a specific clause will suffice to formulate the necessary provision under the chapter on inalienable rights regarding peaceful uses.

It should be emphasized that none of the treaty's provisions, including the one on UCMs, would be country-specific but will apply to all parties to the agreement equally.

Finally, we believe that this stance should be accurately reflected in the report and should be further explored until the Members of the Conference come to a consensus and a workable solution.

Having stated that, Iran is open to additional discussion during this session as well as upcoming Conference sessions and appreciates the input from its other fellow members.

I thank you, Madam President.

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**Statement by
Heidar Ali Balouji
First Counselor of the Permanent Mission
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN – New York
On
Glossary of Terminology or Definitions**

**Before the Third Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a
Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of
Mass Destruction
New York, 14-18 November 2022**

In the Name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Madam President,

From our point of view, to avoid any misunderstanding and misinterpretation and instead to understand and act on a common understanding accepted by all treaty members, the proposal to prepare a glossary of terminology or definitions is very timely, useful, and necessary. We thank the Lebanese Presidency for this constructive proposal.

Of course, it is obvious that such a matter has its complexities and requires sufficient time and resources besides holding technical meetings with the presence of experts in each field.

As a practice for each international treaty, here, we will need to recognize and define an exhaustive list of key terms employed by the treaty and its subsidiary documents or institutions. As always, each term should be clear as well as meticulously defined and understood for its respective treaty. The definition alone can affect the rights and obligations of parties of a treaty, therefore the more clarity we have about these terms, the less conflicting interpretation or interchangeable understandings can arise.

However, while there can be different approaches in this process, my delegation believes that although we can utilize the definitions already concluded in the treaties or conventions like the NPT, BWC, and CWC by default, we should also rely on new and specific terms that will require definition as witnessed so far.

Examining various examples prepared in the field of disarmament and arms control, and of course, the existing treaties of nuclear-weapon-free zones can be a good example for such a matter. At the same time, the number of terminologies identified and the definitions prepared for each make it clear to pay attention to the aforementioned requirements.

Among many examples and models, the glossary of the terminology introduced by some international organizations and institutions, each represents the scope of their respective work alone.

Considering the scope of the Middle East Treaty zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, more efforts will be required. Paying attention to the working and negotiating procedures of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties will certainly be helpful.

In this context, it will be very useful to consult with each of the above-mentioned authorities. We hope that the review of the ways of compilation a glossary of terminology as well as recognizing and defining the needed key terms, while taking into account all possible angles and implications without duplication or redundancy, can be one of the proposed topics for the Working Committee sessions next year.

We hope that the next sessions of the Conference will follow this topic so an important task for drafting the treaty to be conducted.

I thank you, Madam President.

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**Statement by
Heidar Ali Balouji
First Counselor of the Permanent Mission
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN – New York
On
Working Committee**

**Before the Second Session of the Conference on the Establishment of
a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of
Mass Destruction
New York, 14-19 November 2022**

In the Name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Madam President,

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the establishment and functioning of the working committee of the conference establishing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, as a correct step in the right direction.

A look at the performance of the working committee, which has so far held two content-based expert meetings, shows that this committee has provided a suitable opportunity for the countries of the region to exchange opinions with experts. As we have seen, such discussions have been the basis for further interaction and consultation among the countries of the region.

However, proposing some opinions and ideas in clear contradiction to create a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, and against the basic principles and related documents, only takes us away from the main goal.

However, it seems that the raising of these ideas and the answers given will remove possible doubts and pave the way ahead.

What is important for us right now is to ensure that we continue on the right path. For this purpose and according to the experience of the past year, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran raises the following considerations:

1- Although the functions of the committee may be different in the future, currently the best function of the committee is to play the role of the expert arm of the conference.

2- The selection of discussed topics and invited experts to prepare articles and present them should be done more carefully. The more accurate and practical the chosen topic is, the more benefit will be gained for the conference.

3- Choosing an independent and impartial expert will play an important role in planning and following the issues efficiently. The sensitivities related to the Middle East region double the importance and necessity of applying such precision. Examining the works published by various experts confirms this opinion. Some of the works published by some experts, especially experts from outside the Middle East region, are in a way to highlight and advocate positions of their own country or maybe another side. In our opinion, such a situation should be avoided and it is necessary to prioritize inviting experts, first of all from the countries of this region and then from the member countries of the nuclear weapons-free zones.

4- The Members of the Conference should be consulted in advance and the preparation, whether procedural or substantive, should be based on their feedback.

5- Based on the above considerations, the exact proposal of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the working committee after the current session of the Conference is to hold two rounds of substantial sessions of the committee in the following order:

a. - In the first round, representatives from 2 or 3 regions zone free of nuclear weapons should be invited to speak and exchange ideas with the representatives of the countries of the Middle East region. The advantage of this approach is that topics can be discussed with a more specialized approach and depth.

b. - The second round can follow the previous discussion of the working committee with the presence of experts from the Middle East region. If the second meeting is held with the presence of relevant technical experts (including military, security, and industrial experts) from the countries of the region, the outcome of the meeting will play a positive role in bringing together the views of various stakeholders at the national and regional levels.

6- The theme proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran for the next year's working committee is to focus solely on a glossary of terminology as well as

the nuclear weapons aspect of the treaty. As mentioned in the title of the conference, the discussion of nuclear weapons is separate and precedes other weapons of mass destruction. In the next sessions of the working committee, various dimensions related to nuclear weapons, from general obligations to other dimensions such as verification, the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and other related issues can be discussed. In our opinion, considering the importance of the issue and the need for more time for the necessary considerations by the countries, this issue cannot be done in only two or more sessions of the committee, and it is better to continue until the conclusion and consensus among the countries of the region are reached.

7- According to the experience of last year and the obstacles and problems that have been observed in the way of holding the conference, from the reluctance of some related international organizations to participate to the rejection of participation in the conference by some other invitees, it is necessary to the consideration of this issue aiming at solving the issue should be on the agenda of the committee and the conference itself. This issue has been identified as one of the necessary issues for discussion in the second session of the conference.

I thank you Madam President.