



Statement

by

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to the United Nations

at the

Tenth NPT Review Conference: General Debate

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Mr. President,

Congratulations on your election, as president of the 10th NPT review conference, and the best of luck steering it to a successful conclusion. We assure you of our support.

Lebanon aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Arab Group, and that of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

This Conference, is taking place after two years of delay, during which our world has witnessed, unprecedented events, and is still facing difficult challenges. The whole international strategic environment has shifted, and underwent tectonic changes. The situation is volatile and more dangerous today.

The tense Relations between the great powers, and conflict are wrecking the established global order. The Covid pandemic, the current inflation, and the rise in food prices are leading to hunger, and even instability in some parts of the world.

These challenges, and the state of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, are a matter of grave concern to all of us. Bipolarity of the cold war has been replaced by “nuclear multipolarity”, with so many states acquiring nuclear weapons.

The world is at risk of sliding into a nuclear war, and the use of nuclear weapons, by design or miscalculation, is higher than anytime before.

The arms control infrastructure that kept nuclear weapons in their silos, during the cold war has frayed. The New START Treaty is the single remaining leg of this regime.

In the meantime, the nuclear weapons’ states are modernizing and upgrading their nuclear arsenals in violation of the NPT. The threat of using nuclear weapons has become part of the political rhetoric, and the role of nuclear weapons in military strategies is being elevated, and mainstreamed, by many countries.

Another worrying sign is that deterrence is seen as a better guarantee than arms control agreements.

This is happening in an environment where the arms control process has stalled, and the strategic dialogue between the United States and Russia is frozen, with little sign that it will resume soon.

In few days the world will commemorate the 77th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with all their horrors, and this lesson for humanity: Never again. Nuclear weapons should Never again be used, or threatened to be used by anyone.

That is why this conference, could not have come at a more important time, for international peace and security, and for non-proliferation.

Mr. President,

The picture is not all dark. Here are few signs of hope.

-The entry into force of the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW).

-The extension of the New START Treaty by the United States and Russia, is another important step in rebuilding the arms control regime.

-The joint statement that the P-5 nuclear powers put out on the 3rd of January 2022 affirmed that “a nuclear war cannot be won, and must never be fought”. They also affirmed their commitment to their NPT obligations, including article VI.

This review conference is a golden opportunity for all the States Parties to the NPT, especially the P5, to renew their commitments, and obligations to the treaty, and its previous review outcomes, in 2000 and 2010, and to its three pillars and their mutually reinforcing nature.

Such commitment will revitalize and strengthen the NPT, the corner stone of the non- proliferation regime, and it will also send a strong message, that there is a global consensus, that the use of nuclear weapons is a red line.

Mr. President,

Lebanon believes that a re-commitment to the Treaty by all the States Parties should include:

-A renewed commitment to the implementation of the 1995 resolution, which calls for the establishment of a nuclear- free zone in the Middle East. The adoption of the resolution at the 1995 NPT RevCon, was an integral part of the indefinite extension of the NPT.

Lebanon adds its voice to that of the Arab Group, and calls during this conference on the States parties to the treaty, especially the three sponsors of the 1995 resolution to translate their commitments into tangible steps, and take immediate measures to implement the resolution, and move forward to establish the zone.

Lebanon welcomes the successful outcomes of the first, and second sessions of the Conference, on the Establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, chaired by Jordan in 2019 and Kuwait in 2021, convened pursuant to UNGA decision 73/546.

Lebanon is looking forward to taking up the presidency of the Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons from Kuwait in November, and hopes to build upon the work done by both Jordan and Kuwait in this regard.

- There should be also a clear message in this conference about the urgency of the CTBT entering into force, now.

-The peaceful use of nuclear energy is a right and an important pillar of the NPT. The nuclear states should help developing countries, to have access to this right without delay, or discrimination.

-Lebanon supports the IAEA, and commends the professional and balanced role the agency has been playing.

Mr. President,

The late American president JFKennedy once said:” Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us”.

Mr. President, this is us, and our world today. We are hanging by the slenderest of threads. We should not allow nuclear weapons to cut us out of existence. We must abolish them.

I thank you Mr. President.