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**Statement by
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of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
Before the fourth session of
the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass
Destruction
New York, 13 November 2023**

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

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by congratulating you for the assumption of the presidency of this session of the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Under your able leadership, we anticipate a successful session.

Mr. President,

The current global landscape emphasizes the urgency of establishing a Middle East zone free from all WMDs. The existence of such weapons, at the regional or global level, poses an existential threat to humanity, often serving as a tool for blackmail. At the international level, there is a pressing need to address the risks associated with the sharing and potential proliferation of nuclear weapons by USA and NATO.

At the regional level, the arsenal of weapons held by the Israeli regime has generated immense and actual concerns of

proliferation. Recent nuclear threats directed by the high-ranking officials of the Israeli regime toward Iran and Palestine, highlight the peril of these arms in the hands of such an illegitimate regime. In light of recent atrocities in the Middle East, we express our urgent concern regarding Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity and the potential use of weapons of mass destruction in the Gaza conflict or elsewhere, if not prevented now. The secrecy surrounding Israel's nuclear capabilities poses a significant threat to regional stability and calls for immediate action to address this issue. In these critical times, the imperative to establish a such a zone in the Middle East has never been more urgent. Now, more than ever, the establishment of a WMD-free Middle East stands as an essential step towards a safer, and more secure future.

We welcome the “Joint Communique by the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons by Israel” adopted by full and valuable support of the OIC Member States. In this spirit, we propose a declaration by this Conference condemning the nuclear threat posed by the Israeli regime. This declaration aims to condemn the use or threat of nuclear weapons and underscore the necessity of transparency, responsible conduct, and a commitment to peaceful resolutions in the region.

It's imperative that the international community acknowledges these threats by the Israeli regime as a stark wake-up call. The Israeli regime's actions, including instances of terrorism and sabotage against civilian nuclear programs and scientists in the region, call for immediate intervention from international bodies such as the UN Security Council and the IAEA.

On the other hand, Israel's unwarranted refusal to engage in this crucial conference, bolstered by unwavering U.S. support, is untenable. Such reluctance and external backing hinder vital discussions for global security. It's imperative to cease this obstruction and encourage meaningful participation for the collective benefit of international stability. In addition, any other country enabling Israel's armament activities violates international law and contributes to the proliferation of these dangerous weapons.

On the brink of the conference's fifth year, it's crucial to pinpoint the areas demanding further attention, considering specific thematic discussions. Here are the refined suggestions to steer a focused and fruitful discourse:

- 1- Upholding the principled stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is completely in line with the requirements of the NPT, the guiding principles approved by the Disarmament Commission and

the logical and strategic necessity of creating zones free of nuclear weapons, the main special task of the zones free of nuclear weapons is to ensuring the absence of weapons in that area, therefore we emphasize on the necessity for genuine disarmament before establishing nuclear-free zones. Acknowledging the absence of an agreed-upon mechanism within the International Atomic Energy Agency for monitoring nuclear weapons' destruction, we support further discussions on utilizing existing mechanisms while identifying weaknesses. Addressing this issue is pivotal in creating nuclear weapons-free zones specially in a region like Middle East with real existence of WMDs in region. In furthering this aim, other critical aspects and options for verification could be discussed. In this vein, after the thematic discussions, this issue should be referred to the Working Committee for a comprehensive resolution, involving technical experts from the IAEA and member states to address existing gaps effectively.

2- Delving into the utilization of nuclear, biological, and chemical technologies for peaceful purposes, learning from past experiences of insufficient compliance by the developing countries is critical. The disparity between commitments of developing and developed countries concerning peaceful technology access warrants detailed provisions in the regional treaty. Anticipating the facilitation of peaceful technology access, the treaty should ensure

not only recognition of this right but also concrete enforcement mechanisms to defend member rights against any obstacles. Precluding unilateral coercive measures in line with peaceful technology and international cooperation provisions is imperative. Thankfully, through years of discussions and shared perspectives at this conference, a substantial understanding of this issue has emerged, leading to its agreement for inclusion in the final treaty during last year's conference session.

Utilizing experts in the Working Committee to further dissect this issue is recommended for a deeper understanding. On another note, to promote peace and cooperation in the region, we advocate for a collaborative effort among Middle Eastern nations to establish a framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation. This includes the creation of a consortium for fuel production among countries with nuclear power plants, fostering transparency, trust, and shared resources for the benefit of all involved.

3- Regular review intervals, typically held every five years in treaty and international processes, should be considered within the present conference's framework. It provides with the member states a backward-looking review of the activities and conclusions of the Conference while drawing a boosted road map for expediting the achievement of the goals. This strategic consideration for the

next year will fortify the conference's trajectory. It's crucial to address conference obstacles, particularly focusing on the constructive participation of all members and invited observers.

4- Acknowledging the significance of internal stakeholders' involvement in facilitating the conference's ultimate goal, proposing regional events to engage all internal stakeholders from diverse military and civilian sectors looks great. Encouraging voluntary assistance from any country in the region, aside from the hosting country, will greatly enhance the engagement and support of the internal stakeholders while contributing the information dissemination, awareness, and overall conference efficiency.

5- Leveraging the valuable experience of other regional treaties underscores the need for continuous and sustained engagement with those organizations and treaties during the drafting and implementation of the treaty, thereby integrating these relationships into the process's program of work is truly advisable.

Mr. President,

Iran remains resolute in upholding its international commitments including its CSA commitments while diligently safeguarding our national interests in accordance with international law.

As customary, Iran is prepared to actively contribute and play a constructive role in ensuring the success of the Conference.

I thank you Mr. President.