



Statement

by
the Charge d' Affairs
of the

Mission of **Lebanon**

to the United Nations

Mr. Hadi Hachem

at the General debate of
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, November 13, 2023

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***Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY 10017***

Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of this Conference. And to wish you success in your efforts to steer the work of the fourth session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

I also thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, represented by the Under Secretary General of Disarmament Affairs, for their participation.

I cease this opportunity as well to thank all the members for the support extend to our presidency during the third session of the Conference and for showing collaboration and flexibility leading to the adoption of the final report of the Conference and the fruitful meetings of the Working Group. I wish to thank also the Secretary General of the Conference and his team for their instrumental support to the presidency and the conference.

Mr. President,

Nuclear Weapons free zones are key component of the disarmament agenda. Lebanon sees the establishment of such a zone in The Middle East as an urgent need for fostering security and stability in this important region of the world.

Mr. President,

It has been more than a month since the start of the war on Gaza. The number of deaths among civilians is staggering and the humanitarian crisis faced by the civilian population of Gaza is unprecedented.

We condemn the issuance of a nuclear threats by the Israeli Minister of Heritage, against the people of Gaza. This self-acknowledgment of having nuclear weapons and the threat of using them by its officials, poses a serious threat to both regional and international peace and security.

We urge Israel to cease and refrain from such rhetoric or posturing, to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear weapon state and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA's safeguard.

Nuclear proliferation in the Middle East should be tackled with the urgency it deserves.

Mr. President,

The convening of the fourth session of this Conference constitutes an opportunity for participating States to continue to seek, in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, a common ground on the establishment of this zone. It is also important to use this platform, under the umbrella of the United Nations, to express concerns, propose solutions and have discussions in good faith, in order to achieve the desired end goal.

Mr. President,

We convene as great-powers rivalry and tension have reached their highest levels in generations. And the international security environment is on the verge of an irreparable rift. For many countries, whose very existence is a stake, the fear from a possible nuclear war is increasing. The modernization and expansion of nuclear arsenals, further complicates this environment.

The arms control architecture and the nonproliferation regime are fraying and weakened, wiping out the gains of a half century in arms control. The New Start Treaty, the only leg remaining of the arms control regime, itself was suspended, thus increasing risks of miscalculation.

Lebanon therefore calls for the full implementation of all previous commitments assumed by Nuclear Weapon States at the 1995, 2000, and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, to attain the total dismantling of their nuclear arsenals and leading to a world free of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, the special responsibility of nuclear weapon States, especially the obligations and commitments of the three depositary States of the Treaty that co-sponsored the 1995 resolution, should be upheld in order to implement it in its entirety. Such a commitment and step can put the region on the much-needed path of security and stability.

Mr. President,

Several regions around the world succeeded in establishing zones free of nuclear weapons, the Middle East should not remain the exception. Rather it should be part of this progress, and this conference puts it on the right path to achieve this outcome.

At this crucial time our world is witnessing, all countries are requested to spare no efforts to continue to promote the full and effective implementation of the NPT as well as its universalization. A progress is very much needed to further strengthen the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important framework for promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The path towards establishing the zone is long, but all countries present today are showing commitment to realizing it. This is a testament of our commitment to uphold international law and to fulfil our obligation to the future generations and to lay the foundation for a stable region free of weapons of mass destruction and their threat to humanity.

I thank you Mr. President