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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by
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General Debate on All Agenda Items

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Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship, and let me assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The foundations of arms control and nonproliferation continue to be challenged by rogue states; it begins with the lack of commitment by states to fulfill their obligations in good faith for a better and safer world, and continues with blatant non-compliance with existing obligations. The Middle East is still struggling with a chronic lack of compliance with non-proliferation and arms control norms, obligations and mechanisms. This culture of non-compliance and disregard for international obligations and norms has, regrettably, become both very common and very dangerous in the region. In addition, worryingly so, it seems that the International Community is willing to accept the existence of this culture of non-compliance. There is an urgent need to act upon this and focus international efforts on the implementation, compliance and verification of state obligations.

Mr. Chairperson,

On the nuclear front, Israel continues to support the global non-proliferation regime. Unfortunately, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in itself does not provide a remedy for the unique security challenges of the region, let alone the repeated violations of the Treaty by some of its member states. Four of

the five cases of serious violations of the NPT took place in the Middle East since its entry into force.

For its part, Israel continues to actively support the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and contributes to nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation activities, including within the framework of the IAEA and the CTBTO.

Mr. Chairperson,

For decades now, Iran has been rapidly advancing its illicit nuclear program, and currently possesses large quantities of highly enriched nuclear material. Concurrently, Iran progresses significantly in processing uranium metal, develops and industrializes advanced centrifuges all while fortifying these capabilities.

These developments, and especially the accumulation of irreversible knowledge by Iran, make the JCPOA worthless from a proliferation point of view at this time.

While returning to the JCPOA may set back the Iranian nuclear program for a very short time, it will provide Iran access to hundreds of billions of dollars, which will un-doubtedly be used to support Iran terror activity in the Middle East and beyond. Iran's conduct over the past year and a half, in which under the guise of ongoing negotiations, continued to make rapid progress in its nuclear capabilities, indicates that Iran has never given up on its pursuit of military nuclear capabilities, as it was exposed in the seized nuclear archive, and that it sees negotiations as a convenient tool to buy time.

Parallel to its nuclear pursuit, Iran continued to violate its Safeguards Obligations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) and the Additional Protocol. For four years now, Iran has avoided providing adequate answers the IAEA on four investigations concerning undeclared nuclear material activity performed in undeclared nuclear sites. We call upon the international community to demand that Iran cooperates with the agency in the manner defined in the IAEA report of May 30th, and adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors resolution of June 8th which clarified that: “Unless and until Iran provides technically credible explanations for the presence of uranium particles of anthropogenic origin at Turquzabad, Varamin and ‘Marivan’ and informs the Agency of the current location(s) of the nuclear material and/or of the contaminated equipment, the Agency cannot confirm the correctness and completeness of Iran’s declarations under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. Therefore, the safeguards issues related to these three locations remain outstanding”.

The integrity and professionalism of the agency and its perusal should never be compromised due to political considerations.

Iran has also bluntly violated its obligations under ANNEX B of Resolution 2231 from the outset and has continued to proliferate advanced missiles and UAVs to numerous terrorist organizations under its influence. Iranian missiles, some of which have strategic capabilities such as precision guided munition, are used by terrorists and armed militias with the

purpose of causing chaos and threatening all Middle East countries, Israel among them.

Iran also attempts to destabilize the region by using every possible tool at its disposal: terrorism, the use of missile and rocket attacks against its neighbors, and attacks on merchant ships on the high seas from its own territory and the territory of other countries in the region, namely Syria or Iraq. Iran's support for terrorist organizations, which includes supplying weapons, financial and political support, as well as military training, contradicts numerous UNSC resolutions.

Since the entry into force of UNSCR 2231, Iran has tested dozens of ballistic missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Furthermore, Iran has landed several satellite launch vehicles, that include components used in ICBMs.

Mr. Chairperson,

The use of chemical weapons by states in the Middle East, against their own population and against neighboring countries, occurred five times since the Second World War. These events constituted a clear violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Furthermore, two additional cases of regional member states violating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) are still in question and need to be further investigated. Towards this end, the international community should strongly support the important work of the Organization for the

Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its bodies. Israel is a party to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and a signatory state to the CWC. Israel supports the important work of the OPCW as appropriate. Israel also has a longstanding record of cooperating with and showing support for the relevant UN bodies in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

Despite the chemical weapon disarmament process in Syria, from 2014 onwards we have witnessed hundreds of incidents where chemical weapons were used in Syria by the Assad regime against the Syrian population. In the past four years, the OPCW IIT mechanism (Investigation and Identification Team) has been investigating specific incidents concerning the usage of chemical weapons in Syria.

Two IIT reports from April 2020, and April 2021, attributed responsibility for five different chemical attacks on civilians which took place in 2017 and 2018 to the Syrian government which previously acceded to the CWC and avowed to forgo its entire chemical weapons program.

The IIT's reports came after several reports and findings of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) and the Joint Investigating Mechanism (JIM), which the concerned international community established since the first time Syria used chemical weapons on its own citizens in 2012. The IIT's reports clearly call upon the Syrian government to cooperate with the OPCW and the international community, in rectifying the gaps and discrepancies in its declaration on chemical weapons, as well as take full responsibility and be

held accountable for its actions in violation of its obligations under the CWC and with regard to the destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal.

Having failed to fulfill its commitments within the specified time, the Conference of the States Parties (CSP) to the CWC, suspended on April 2021 certain rights and privileges of Syria under the Convention.

The IIT team continues its vital activity, and despite the lack of cooperation of the Syrian regime, is expected to issue additional reports, which will testify to the crimes of the Assad regime.

Syria's statement to the OPCW has been changed nearly 20 times and even today it cannot be considered a complete statement. It is clear that Syria still has chemical weapon capabilities and that it has never deserted its ambition to acquire further such capabilities. The regime's lack of cooperation with the OPCW's investigative teams, the continued concealment and deception raise a real fear that there is a significant residual chemical array in Syria and perhaps more than that.

It is vital that the international community remain vigilant in dealing with the challenge of Syria's non-compliance in order to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons and to reinstate it. The International community must also continue to investigate Syria's current capabilities and activity with regard to its chemical weapons program.

Mr. Chairperson.

The existence of undeclared nuclear activities in Syria, remains relevant and worrying as well as the open questions related to the nature, and operational status, of the specific sites and materials within Syria. The construction of the clandestine nuclear reactor in Syria was done in blatant violation of Syria's safeguards obligations, as it should have been declared to the Agency. Had this reactor been completed and operated, it would have been ideally-suited to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. Syria must cooperate with the IAEA.

Mr. Chairperson,

Conventional weapons continue to claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent victims around the world on an annual basis. These weapons, especially missiles, rockets, small arms and light weapons (SALW), and related technologies, are proliferated throughout the world. It is clear that states need to fulfill their international obligations - not only to refrain from proliferating conventional weapons - but rather to fight proliferation and prove effective in the management of their stockpiles.

The compliance and implementation of instruments, as applicable, like the UN Plan of Action (UNPoA) on SALW and its International Tracking Instrument (ITI), or the Certain Conventional Weapons Treaty (CCW), are important if we wish to achieve the goal of a safer world.

In this regard, Israel delivered its annual report to the UN Register, as well as its annual report on Military Expenditure and its biannual report to the UNPoA on SALW. Additionally, Israel joined as an observer to the Anti Personal Land Mine Convention (APLM) and has extended the moratorium on all exports, sales or other transfers of all anti-personal landmines for an additional period of three years, until July 2023. As a High Contracting Party to the Certain Conventional Weapons Treaty (CCW), Israel also delivered its national report of compliance to the CCW and the report to the Additional Protocol II of the CCW as well. Israel is a signatory state to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and participates, as appropriate, in its work program throughout the year.

Mr. Chairperson,

On the matter of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Israel wishes to emphasize its clear view that the Treaty, which Israel does not support, does not create or contribute to the development of, or indicate the existence of, customary law related to the subject or the content of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairperson,

On the issue of cybersecurity, Israel attaches great importance to efforts to strengthen international security and stability in cyberspace. Israel's global position in the digital domain is based on a robust domestic ecosystem that encourages real-time information sharing and the development of comprehensive methodologies. Furthermore, Israel supports

educational programs and raises public awareness to cybersecurity. Israeli designed cybersecurity tools and knowhow assist in keeping critical data and infrastructures safe around the world. The basic tenets of Israel's cyber ecosystem should therefore be promoted on the global level, in order to enhance global resilience, by means of practical cooperation and capacity-building programs.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson,

Some actors in the region claim that a comprehensive security architecture can be initiated in the Middle East without direct engagement with Israel, without recognition of Israel's right to exist within safe and secure borders, without reducing regional tensions and the building of the necessary trust and confidence among regional states, and with disregard to norms and principles that were agreed upon in the relevant fora. This position is untenable.

Ill motivated initiatives, such as the UN Conference on a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, go against the guidelines and established principles of any Nuclear Weapons Free Zones and are unhelpful. Israel will not participate in artificial processes that bypass established practices. Experience of other regions demonstrate that any framework of regional security can only be the outcome of a mutual political desire of all regional parties to engage with each other, taking into consideration the security concerns of each and every state and reflecting arrangements freely arrived at by all states concerned, as

stipulated in the 1999 Disarmament Commission Report on Guidelines and Principles for the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.