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Check Against Delivery

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Statement by

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General Debate on all Disarmament and International Security Agenda  
Items

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Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me congratulate you for presiding over our deliberations, and assure you of our confidence in you steering the discussion to a successful outcome, as well as in the cooperation and support of my delegation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel supports a vision of a Middle East free from wars, hostility, WMD and delivery means. This is a vision which all of the regions' inhabitants should aspire to, based on the hope for peace, mutual recognition, reconciliation and cessation of all acts of terrorism, aggression and hostility. **At the same time,** Israel believes that arms control and disarmament processes are inseparable from the context in which they exist. They need to be formulated in a way that addresses the relevant circumstances, challenges and threats prevailing in the region. These processes cannot be disassociated from the problematic surrounding environment, which is their raison d'etre.

For arms control and disarmament processes to be meaningful and relevant, one must begin by defining the essence of the problems which need to be addressed, the most effective way to tackle them, who has to participate in the process and the broader security architecture in which the process or agreement would be set. The Middle East is no different. Initiatives for the initiation of a regional dialogue on arms control and disarmament have to be firmly planted in reality. In

order to work they should address all relevant aspects of regional security and enhance the individual and collective security of all regional partners.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since the convening of the previous First Committee, the Middle East- has been further destabilized and radicalized. The erosion of state sovereignty has never been so apparent. Territories which have been in the past under the control of central regimes, are now contested or overrun by terrorist groups to which these territories have been ceded or abandoned. ISIS now controls over 100,000 square kms of Syrian and Iraqi territories, running the daily lives of approximately 6,000,000 people. Other organizations have control over additional areas.

This raises questions as to what extent some states in the region can exercise fundamental functions and control of territory, and the implications to any regional process, should such deliberations begin. The answer to these questions may play a determining factor in the sustainability of any regional endeavor under such circumstances.

Mr. Chairperson,

In today's Middle East, chemical weapons are unfortunately in continuous and regular use. While we recognize that the removal and destruction of the Syrian regime's declared chemical weapons was indeed an important and significant achievement, we are concerned by the erosion of the absolute prohibition against the use of chemical weapons and the evolution of a new, more lenient norm on our borders- one which includes the maintenance of residual capabilities, the increase in the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime that should have stopped immediately after Syria's accession to the CWC and the expansion of use of chemical weapons to additional non-state actors and areas. It is all the more troubling that due to the frequent use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime; the use of such agents is emulated by terror organizations and has become almost commonplace during the fighting. Taken together with the erosion of regional borders this poses a very negative development, especially in light of ambitions by other terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Jihadist groups to acquire and apply such capabilities in the future.

**This cannot be the "new normal"**, neither in the Middle East nor in the world at large. Lasting arms control and disarmament arrangement cannot be based on a record of non-compliance with international obligations. Moral and legal obligations cannot be carelessly flaunted.

Mr. Chairperson,

Iran remains the most significant threat to the security of the Middle East and beyond. The agreement reached between Iran and the P5+1 is unlikely to stop Iran's relentless pursuit of a nuclear weapons' capability. This agreement provides Iran with continuous economic relief, which will enable the Iranian regime to further increase its support for terror organizations by providing additional advanced weapons, financial and political support and training, as well as allow Tehran to advance its subversive activities in the region. These activities, which contradict basic UNSC resolutions, take place while Iran continues its vehement anti-Semitic rhetoric and its threats against Israel and the **security** of its citizens. Even after the agreement between Iran and the P5+1, Iran's supreme leader declared he remains committed to seeking **Israel's destruction** and avowed no moment of serenity for Israel until its **destruction**.

Iran's clandestine activities in the nuclear domain in the past, as well as its continued acts of concealment and duplicity, taken together with its policy of aggression and hostility, raise fundamental questions as to whether regional players understand fully the duty to comply with international legal obligations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Against this troubling backdrop, it is clear that any arms control- disarmament process cannot be detached from reality. Israel believes that a more secure and peaceful Middle East requires all regional States to engage in a process of **direct and sustained dialogue** to address the broad range of regional security challenges in the region, which include all those challenges and threats that the Middle East faces individually as well as collectively.

Such a dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, can only emanate from within the region and address in an inclusive manner the threat perceptions of all regional parties in order to enhance and improve their security. Direct engagement, combined with trust and confidence-building, is an essential basis for the creation of a new security paradigm in a region fraught with wars, conflicts, disintegration of national territories and human suffering.

Accordingly, Israel agreed in 2011 to enter a process of consultations facilitated by the Under-Secretary of State of Finland, Jaakko Laajava, regarding the regional security challenges in the Middle East. Between October 2013 and June 2014, five rounds of multilateral consultations were held in Switzerland between Israel and several of its Arab neighbours. The central purpose of the meetings was to seek regional consensus on **all the essential aspects** of a conference in Helsinki. Israel attended all of these

meetings and engaged in good faith with the other participants, and had agreed to a sixth meeting which did not take place due to the other side's reluctance to continue these talks.

Israel continues to believe that a **direct dialogue** addressing the broad range of security challenges between the regional parties is fundamental for any meaningful consensual discussion on this matter. Israel, for its part, will continue to seek such a meaningful regional discussion that could lead to a more peaceful and secure Middle East.

In the meantime, Israel will continue its policy of adopting, wherever possible, arms and export control agreements and arrangements. Amongst other steps, Israel signed the CTBT and is actively engaged in the fleshing out of its verification regime. This year Israel also hosted a workshop following the Integrated Field Exercise (IFE) 2014 in Jordan. Israel signed the CWC and is actively engaged and maintains a close dialogue with the OPCW. Israel adopted a policy of adherence to all suppliers' regimes and incorporates through its legislation their control lists. In this respect, Israel's signature on the ATT last year reflects its ongoing commitment to a robust and responsible export control system.

Mr. Chairperson,

We hope that in the next first committee meeting we will have a more stable and peaceful Middle East with less wars and terror and much more willingness to talk and discuss directly and peacefully.

I thank you.