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The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

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نيويورك

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Amr Aboulatta
Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in New York
at the

Substantive Session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission

Please check against delivery,

New York, April 4, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you for your election to preside this year's substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as well as to express our appreciation to your efforts in this important forum. Likewise, I would like to extend our congratulations to other Members of the Bureau for their election, and to commend Kazakhstan and Morocco for chairing the two UNDC Working Groups respectively. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. At the outset, I would also like to associate Egypt's position with the positions reflected in the statements delivered by on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group, and the Arab Group.

This year is particularly important for the UNDC, as it comes after the unprecedented momentum and forthcoming results of the latest 1st Committee of the current 70th UNGA session. Hence, a consensus substantive outcome is most important this year, if we are to preserve the relevance of the UNDC to the multilateral machinery on disarmament, especially given the successive failures of the past cycles of the commission to adopt an outcome since 1999. We call upon Nuclear-weapon States and major arms exporters to display the necessary political will, in order to reach a substantive outcome on the two important issues before the UNDC agenda, in order to enable the potential of the UNDC in furthering the cause of disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin with "Working Group I" on "Recommendations for Achieving the Objective of Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons". The starting point in this regard should be the implementation of the General Assembly resolution on the Follow-up to the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament held on September 26, 2013 (69/58). The resolution continues to chart a road map towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The UNDC should be ready to contribute its part in

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deliberating on the implementation of this road map, especially with regard to the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

Egypt welcomes the continued momentum on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the incompatibility of their use with international humanitarian law. We support the calls for the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. Nuclear Weapon States bear a special responsibility in avoiding any possibility of what would be a catastrophe.

The universalization of the NPT is an indispensable step to achieve general and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. The speedy establishment of nuclear weapon free zones adds impetus to efforts aimed at achieving the wider objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community has recognized the urgency of the establishment of a Zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet, despite these repeated calls, and the overwhelming global support for the establishment of the Zone, the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, remains unfulfilled. The Resolution remains valid until its objectives are achieved, and hence should be implemented without any further delay. The UNDC provides a timely opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the international community to bring the process back on track. It provides an adequate forum to reflect on how to break the current stalemate, and to restore the credibility and relevance of the NPT review process, if not the treaty itself.

Mr. Chairman,

Deliberations of Working Group II of the UNDC on “Practical Confidence-Building Measures in the Field of Conventional Weapons” assume a growing importance. By contributing to the debate on confidence building measures, the UNDC will be helping to address areas of concern relating to conventional weapons, including the salient issue of illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

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We have consistently called for the following elements as integral components of any possible confidence building measures:

1. Subjecting over production and ever-increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of major arms exporters and producers to international inspection.
2. Mutual international accountability; as the only guarantee against potential abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world.
3. Addressing protracted threats to international peace and security. In this regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and stability, to international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and to the core principles of the UN Charter itself than the crimes of aggression and foreign occupation which employ conventional arms arsenals to threaten and dominate peoples and deny them their most basic human rights.

By developing such 'confidence building measures', the UNDC will be refining the traditional meaning of the term, thus contributing conceptually to enhancing international peace, security and stability.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt stands ready to contribute constructively to the deliberations to ensure a balanced outcome between the results of the two Working Groups that reflects a balance between the interests of all states. We are confident in your ability to steer the discussion towards a successful outcome of this cycle.

I do thank you Mr. Chair