



The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
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**Statement
by H.E. Ambassador Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt
to the United Nations
on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition
before
the General Debate
of the First Committee**

New York, 9 October, 2013

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Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) members: Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country Egypt.
2. We warmly welcome your appointment as Chair of this year's First Committee and look forward to supporting and cooperating with you over the coming weeks.
3. The Coalition will present a draft resolution to this Committee which will be introduced during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

4. As a cross-regional grouping, the NAC works actively for concrete progress on nuclear disarmament. Achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons thus remains the NAC's primary goal.
5. The issue of nuclear disarmament has been on the international agenda since nuclear weapons were first used. Sixty-seven years after the UN General Assembly sought to initiate a process to achieve "*the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable for mass destruction*," much remains to be done to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapons-free world.

6. And yet, the existence of nuclear weapons continues to pose a threat to the very survival of humanity. The renewed international focus on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has reinvigorated international efforts to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. We firmly believe that there is a shared understanding that the only guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.
7. More than 125 countries came together last March in Oslo to discuss the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Evidence presented during that meeting made it clear that no country, group of countries or international humanitarian organization is capable of dealing with the devastation that will arise from any nuclear detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design. We look forward to the follow-up conference that will take place in Mexico next February.
8. Last year, this Assembly responded to the lack of movement on nuclear disarmament. It did so by establishing an Open-Ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, which met in Geneva this year . It also mandated a High-Level Meeting on nuclear disarmament, at which the NAC participated actively just a few days ago. We believe these meetings will bolster efforts towards a nuclear weapons free world.
9. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education plays a crucial role in supporting those efforts. We value the role played by civil society and we encourage its increased participation in all nuclear disarmament efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

10. There is a growing gap between increased awareness of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons on the one hand, and the slow pace – if any – on achieving nuclear disarmament on the other. Rather than lamenting that fact, the NAC and many other states, as well as civil society, have chosen to direct much energy towards initiatives that hold the promise of progress on nuclear disarmament. This is entirely consistent with the obligation of all States to advance nuclear disarmament. The nuclear-weapon-States have a special and differentiated responsibility in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The Action Plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference was an important step forward that holds the potential to put the process

towards a nuclear-weapon-free world back on track. The nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, and committed to accelerating progress in this regard. This reaffirmed the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, including the 13 practical steps, to advance the implementation of Article VI of the NPT.

12. The Action Plan also contained a requirement for the nuclear-weapon States to report on the actions they have taken to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament. We look forward to reviewing these reports and we underline the importance of assessing the implementation of the Action Plan.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Throughout the last 15 years, the NAC has advocated for the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures. While there has been some reason for optimism along the way, we have been disappointed by the slow pace of nuclear disarmament, both at the regional and global levels, despite successive undertakings from the nuclear-weapon-states. Although undertakings are not lacking in this field, concrete progress is.
14. The absence in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, including the failure to hold a conference in 2012 on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, continues to be a serious concern. All efforts must be exerted to hold the Conference without any further delay.
15. In this context, we note all efforts aimed at advancing the goal of establishing a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including the Egyptian initiative of 28 September 2013 in this regard.
16. Nuclear disarmament is an international legal obligation. It is also a moral imperative. In spite of the growing international consensus regarding the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons, an estimated 20,000 nuclear devices still exist, and nuclear weapons remain at the heart of the security doctrines of many States. Far from strengthening international peace and security, this state of affairs serves to weaken

it, aggravating international tensions and conflict, and jeopardizing the collective well-being of all States and peoples.

17. Indeed, in a world where the basic human needs of billions cannot be met, the growing spending on nuclear weapons is both unacceptable and unsustainable. The allocation of vast resources to retain and modernize nuclear weapons is at odds with international aspirations to development, as expressed by world leaders at the turn of the century. Rather than investing in nuclear weapons, governments should direct much-needed resources towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman,

18. Over the years, significant progress has been made on nuclear non-proliferation objectives, limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament, however, has yet to be realised. We firmly believe that a legally-binding and multilateral commitment to nuclear disarmament, backed by clearly defined timelines and benchmarks, is long overdue. This would serve to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and guide all future efforts.
19. A nuclear weapons free world is within our collective grasp. Achieving this goal will require concerted action with a humanitarian focus at its core.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.