Statement by
the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran
at the First Committee's Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons
New York - 22 October 2015

In the name of God, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful

My delegation associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

The Islamic Republic of Iran underlines the imperative of total elimination of nuclear weapons, as a requirement of international security and an obligation under the NPT.

The complete lack of progress can best characterize the state of affairs with respect to the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments. As a result of the opposition by a small minority, the 2015 NPT Review Conference could not conclude with a substantive final document.

We attach great importance to the NPT as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is imperative to vigorously follow up the implementation of the nuclear disarmament commitments agreed upon at its Review Conferences.

In this context, delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has submitted a biennial draft resolution entitled "follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons". It will be issued as document L.23. The draft is similar to previous resolution adopted in the 68th session of the General Assembly.
in 2013 and only some technical updates have been made in the text in order to factually reflect the result of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. This draft resolution calls for full and non-selective implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

Unprecedented dissatisfactions voiced in the 2013 United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, the 2014 Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and 2015 NPT Review Conference bear strong testimony to the deep frustration of the international community and the non-nuclear weapon States with the consequences of the existing piecemeal approach to nuclear disarmament. This incremental approach has failed to deliver its promises. And there are still thousands of nuclear weapons that threaten annihilation of humanity, intentionally or by accident.

As put forward by the Non-Aligned Movement, consisting of one hundred and twenty States, in 2013, the urgent commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear convention banning nuclear weapons and providing for their verifiable and irreversible destruction within a specified timeframe is the solution to current unacceptable state of affairs.

The nuclear weapon States' arguments about the impracticality of a comprehensive approach to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons are known to us but far from convincing. Such interminable arguments run counter to the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice in its 1996 Advisory Opinion that asserts the obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. The arguments also easily overlook the fact that similar comprehensive approaches were successful in bringing about the elimination of the whole categories of biological and chemical weapons; something that initially looked unfeasible and very ambitious, but finally achieved due to mustered genuine political will.

If the nuclear weapons States cannot, likewise, muster a similar political will and make a fundamental change in their approach vis-à-vis nuclear disarmament, the NPT may not survive in the years to come.

Nuclear weapon States easily blame security conditions for the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. But we put the blame on the continued lack of the political determination to abandon doctrines and strategies of nuclear deterrence and balance of nuclear terror, which might only make sense under outdated and erroneous security paradigm, lies at the core of the predicament that we face in the area of nuclear disarmament. Such a paradigm is premised on a polarizing world, divided into two distinct camps, one equipped with or protected by nuclear weapons, and only preoccupied with their own security at the expense of the others' which are not based on the nuclear option.
The continued existence of nuclear weapons is the main obstacle in the way of discarding this ill-devised paradigm and replacing it by an inclusive global security system with no place therein for nuclear weapons; on the understanding that nuclear weapons, as the most monstrous tools of mass destruction, by their very existence undermine the Charter-based principle of equal right of all States to peace and security as well as the most fundamental human rights and the very foundations of international humanitarian law.

It is true that some reductions have taken place. It is, however, limited and reversible and, worse, it is accompanied by extensive efforts to modernize nuclear weapons. Large budget devoted to nuclear forces modernization suggests that the nuclear weapon States contemplate the indefinite possession of their nuclear arsenals, rather than complying with their treaty obligations to nuclear disarmament.

While the mere reaffirmation by the nuclear-weapon States of their commitment to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons is welcome, but it is obviously quite insufficient and does not equate to compliance with their nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT. There is no escaping from judging them on the basis of their deeds and not their words. Persistent non-compliance with nuclear disarmament commitments could have extensive ramifications: The wider the gap between the nominal commitment to nuclear disarmament and the implementation thereof, the greater the danger of the unraveling of the progress achieved and the possibility of the ultimate defeat of the purposes of the NPT.

Frustration over the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament is strong and deep. However, this strong feeling should neither turn into pessimism and passiveness in pursuing the full implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments nor cause us to resort to actions which would most probably lead to further division among members of the NPT. We need rather to re-engage positively in a focused and determined manner to push for progress in meeting nuclear disarmament obligations, as we move towards the 2018 United Nations high level conference on nuclear disarmament as well as the 2020 NPT Review process.

We strongly believe that an open, inclusive and consensus-based process, in the framework of the United Nations, is capable of securing the broadest possible participation of nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States in a meaningful and truly global endeavor to identify and elaborate effective measures on nuclear disarmament, including legal provisions required for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. To this end, delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has submitted in this session of the First Committee a draft resolution entitled “effective measures on nuclear disarmament”. This draft will be issued as document L.28. Through this resolution, an open-ended working group will be established to meet in New York for three sessions of 10 working days in 2016 and 2017. The resolution invites all States to engage actively in an open and inclusive process.
Mr. Chairman,

No or protracted action on nuclear disarmament is too risky. The continued possession of nuclear weapons by some States always may incite some others to embark on a similar course. No non-proliferation scheme could succeed so long as the achievement of nuclear disarmament is not clearly in perspective.

We have consistently urged that the non-proliferation norm should be applied globally and without exception. Nuclear proliferation is as dangerous in the Middle East as it is in the East Asia. The application of double standards has to be abandoned.

The existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime is obviously the result of the application of double standards by certain nuclear weapon States and their failing to abide by the very non-proliferation norm that they helped set and are legally committed to comply with and invariably enforce.

Iran has a strong interest in and commitment to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. This policy is based on rational, legal and religious grounds. On such a solid basis, Iran is party to all international agreements on the control of weapons of mass destruction, and has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure the universality of the NPT in the Middle East.

But Israel continues to block all international and regional efforts to fulfill this goal, including through the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons. In its latest obstructive act, Israel, in defiance of the will of solid majority of international community, foiled the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which was mandated by the 2010 NPT Review Conference to be held in 2012 under the United Nations auspices.

The existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime, which has a long record of aggression, occupation and the committing of war crimes, poses a serious threat to the security of non-nuclear weapon States Parties in the Middle East. This situation is highly discriminatory and cannot be sustained. The refusal of Israel to abandon its nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT has increased the potential for proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and has resulted in the non-accession of some States to international instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction.

It is ironic that Israel, which has flouted all international norms and agreements governing weapons of mass destruction, has received not only acquiescence but in fact material support for its weapons of mass destruction programs from certain nuclear weapon States. This Committee through its relevant resolutions has to urge Israel to accede to the NPT without condition and without delay.