Mr. Chairman,

Egypt fully associates itself with the statements made by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab Group, and the New Agenda Coalition, and wishes to make the following remarks.

Egypt reiterates its concern over the grave threat posed to humanity and international security by the continued possession of nuclear weapons by a few States, and reaffirms that the total, verifiable, and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their proliferation, use, or threat of use.

Arguments which set preconditions for or artificial impediments to the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations will only lead to the gradual demise of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The rising levels of tensions at the global level coupled with rapid technological developments make the risk of intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons at one of its highest levels since the Cold War era.

Mr. Chairman,

The decades-long stalemate in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, as well as countless similar resolutions, is eroding the credibility and sustainability of the disarmament and nonproliferation regime and multilateral norms, as well as the rule of law at the international level.
This stalemate is one of the root causes of the instability and lack of security in a region that already suffers from chronic military conflicts and arms races, especially taking into consideration the unprecedented spread of armed conflicts and terrorism.

In this regard, we believe that the Conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East which will convene its first session in November 2019 represents an important opportunity for the United Nations to take meaningful practical steps in this direction through an institutional and inclusive process.

The Conference aims at reaching arrangements freely-arrived-at by the States of the region on the basis of consensus. It is a genuine attempt to achieve a longstanding agreed international commitment in a nondiscriminatory manner that does not aim at singling out any State in the region.

At the holistic level, this process would serve as a platform to address all regional disarmament and nonproliferation challenges with a view to establishing a robust regional security architecture conducive to sustainable peace and collective security through dialogue and diplomacy.

We sincerely hope that all invited States will participate in this Conference, which could lead to a major contribution to the strengthening of the international nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regime and a breakthrough in addressing the deteriorating security conditions in the region, not to mention its possible positive impact on the forthcoming NPT 2020 Review Conference which we all hope would succeed.
In the same vein, we also count on the continued support of all Member States to this initiative, as well as to the resolution that Egypt tables annually on “the Establishment of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East” which used to be adopted by consensus until the year 2017, and the resolution that we table on behalf of the Arab Group entitled “The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East”. We consider the support by Member States to be a proof of their commitment to nuclear disarmament as well as to achieving collective security and sustainable peace in the Middle East and to achieving the agreed obligations in this regard.