Specific Issue 1:
Nuclear Disarmament and Security Assurances

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt regards the issue of nuclear disarmament with utmost importance and has consistently promoted international efforts aimed at achieving this goal. It remains our conviction that nuclear weapons, with all the destructive and devastating potential, can never build regional or international peace. At a time when the international community faces serious security challenges, the need for accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments is becoming ever more pressing.

Egypt believes that Nuclear Weapon States should take all necessary measures to ensure the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament in compliance with their obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Such measures should be systematic, progressive, and irreversible. The Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference reiterated the Nuclear Weapon States' unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal and outlined 13 practical steps in this regard. We believe that nuclear disarmament should remain at the forefront of priorities which the 2010 NPT Review Cycle should address and ensure the realization of this objective.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt welcomes the unilateral efforts undertaken by some Nuclear Weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals. We believe that such efforts contribute to improving international security and must be built upon in a progressive manner leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. And while Egypt encourages additional measures leading to nuclear disarmament, it remains preoccupied by the ongoing modernization of nuclear arsenals, the maintenance of a pivotal role for nuclear weapons in defense doctrines, and the formulation of new rationales for their use. Unilateral or bilateral efforts cannot be regarded as an alternative to the full implementation of the commitment contained in Article VI of the Non Proliferation Treaty. As we mark this year the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the NPT, intensive and concerted efforts as well as collective measures by Nuclear Weapon States to achieve nuclear disarmament are urgently needed with the aim of achieving the early and full implementation of Article VI of the NPT.

It is necessary today to engage in a comprehensive and multilateral setting to achieve complete nuclear disarmament in order to strengthen and achieve the objective of the treaty. While the international community continues to press forward for the realization of nuclear disarmament, some Nuclear Weapon States have discouragingly reasoned that the international security conditions need to be favorable for complete nuclear disarmament to be realized. They have also estimated that for such an objective to be realized, non-nuclear weapon states must necessarily be in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Making the nuclear weapon states implement the remaining nuclear disarmament commitments towards the ultimate
list of preconditions is disingenuous. The fact is: the mere presence of nuclear weapons is in and of itself contributing to unfavorable security conditions, and relating the extent to which non nuclear weapon states comply with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations to the realization of nuclear disarmament is an argument that is neither acceptable nor compatible with the NPT.

Furthermore, certain declarations by some Nuclear Weapon States have aimed to shift the responsibility of the existing international political situation to the non nuclear weapon states claiming that it is their obligation to produce the necessary political environment that would enable nuclear weapon states to shoulder their responsibilities. This logic is also being accompanied lately with insinuations that downplay the commitment contained in Article VI and its significance. We do not subscribe to this logic, and once again, call upon Nuclear Weapon States to take serious, immediate steps to fully comply with their obligation contained under Article VI of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

The 2000 Review Conference represented a significant milestone on the road towards the implementation of nuclear disarmament. The Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference identified detailed commitments for States Parties to ensure the successful completion of the Treaty’s objectives, including the Nuclear Weapon States’ unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. We would like to reiterate the pivotal nature of the 13 practical steps which in our view, represent an internationally endorsed roadmap to fulfill the obligation of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It is our expectation that all State Parties, in particular the Nuclear Weapon States, implement the very steps that they endorsed at the 2000 Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt strongly believes that effective security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons lies in complete nuclear disarmament, a noble and much needed objective which has yet to be realized. Achieving complete nuclear disarmament pursuant to Article VI of the NPT will by consequence, provide the most valuable security guarantee, offering an extraordinary contribution to the preservation of international peace and security. By achieving nuclear disarmament, we would in effect, erase the entire rationale and raison d’être for providing security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states.

But in the meantime, the harsh and disturbing reality that thousands of nuclear weapons still exist today continues to haunt us, ultimately forcing states that do not possess these destructive weapons, to engage in a legitimate quest to guarantee their protection and safety by receiving effective security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It is unanswerable for Nuclear Weapon States to continue to maintain nuclear military postures towards Non-Nuclear Weapon States that are in compliance with their Treaty obligations. Both Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Weapon States are bound by the same Treaty and thus should equally benefit from the security it is designed to provide. Egypt reaffirms that pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, there is a pressing need to reach an any
agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

Mr. Chairman.

The issue of effective security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons has been frequently addressed in several international fora, including the International Court of Justice, General Assembly, and Security Council of the United Nations. Egypt recalls the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the “Legality of the Threat or Use by a State of Nuclear Weapons in Armed Conflict” which stated that there is in neither customary nor conventional international law any specific authorisation of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and that a threat or use of force by means of nuclear weapons....is unlawful.” We also recall Paragraph 8 of Decision 2 on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which reaffirmed that “further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear weapon states party to the NPT against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and that these steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument.” We also take note of Security Council Resolution 255 adopted on the 19th of June, 1968 and Resolution 984 on 11th of April, 1995 which have addressed the issue of effective security assurances.

Mr. Chairman,

Although Egypt takes note of and welcomes unilateral declarations made by some nuclear weapon states that provide security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons to non nuclear weapon states, we believe that these declarations fall short of our security requirements and do not adequately or conclusively deal with the issue. For security assurances to be effective, they must be unconditional, comprehensive, legally binding, and negotiated multilaterally.

We also have difficulty grasping the argument that security assurances are already being provided to NPT States Parties through protocols to nuclear weapon free zone treaties. This argument raises an important concern however, since the record of signature and ratification by Nuclear Weapons States to protocols of existing nuclear weapon free zone treaties granting security assurances does not reflect much enthusiasm. Consequently, we believe that there is a pressing need to start negotiations on a multilateral and legally binding instrument to provide non nuclear weapon states with such comprehensive assurances as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman.

I wish to conclude by expressing our sincere hope that the current review cycle of the NPT will prove ready to shoulder it responsibilities in taking substantive steps towards achieving nuclear disarmament and that pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, that an early agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be realized. We currently live in a nuclear universe and the proliferation of these destructive weapons is
more pressing than ever. I reiterate that the delegation of Egypt will spare no effort to support any serious attempts towards achieving this objective.

Thank you.