

Statement by

**H.E. Ambassador Nawaf Salam
Permanent Representative of Lebanon
to the United Nations**

**at the
2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

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Check Against Delivery

***Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY. 10017***

Mr. President,

Clearly, Lebanon fully subscribes to the statement I just delivered on behalf of the Arab Group. However, allow me now to make an additional statement in my national capacity as the Permanent Representative of Lebanon.

Mr. President,

The years 2009 and 2010 have witnessed increased momentum related to the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). President Obama's vision for a 'world without nuclear weapons', set out in his Prague speech last year, was one of a number of positive signs in the field of nuclear disarmament. In this context, we take note of Security Council Resolution 1887 adopted in September 2009, the recent Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) signed between the United States (US) and the Russian Federation (Russia), and the Washington Nuclear Summit commitment to secure nuclear arsenals over the next four years as steps in the right direction. We maintain, however, that much more ought to be done.

Mr. President,

Many nuclear threats remain unaddressed. Mostly remnants of the Cold War, at least 23,000 nuclear warheads are still in existence, over 22,000 of which are held by the US and Russia, while the rest is held by France, the United Kingdom (UK), China, India, Pakistan, and Israel – the latter three parties being non-NPT signatories. Half of these warheads are operationally deployed, and over 2,000 weapons, held by the US and Russia, are ready to be launched immediately. In this context, we urge the implementation of the General Assembly Resolution on Reducing the Operational Readiness of Nuclear Weapons Systems.

In view of the above, we have to reiterate that much more ought to be done and that some breakthroughs are crucial to achieve. The memory of our failure in 2005 is still vivid in our minds, and another setback during the current review conference is a possibility we cannot afford. We have the duty to live up to the expectations of our constituencies which are now, more than ever, harboring the hopes of living in a world wherein a nuclear Armageddon has ceased to loom large.

Mr. President,

Lebanon considers that such breakthroughs must take place on the following four parallel and mutually reinforcing tracks.

^{1st} We have to find the way to make tangible progress on some outstanding issues long overdue, paramount being the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which necessitates Israel's adherence to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State. Israel's long-held policy of nuclear ambiguity was clearly broken when former Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, in 2006, stated that Iran is 'aspiring to have nuclear weapons, as France, America, Russia, and Israel'. This statement but confirms the threat to regional and international security posed by Israel's refusal to adhere to the NPT. According to *Jane's Defense Weekly* and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)'s 2009 Yearbook, Israel has around 200 nuclear warheads, putting it among the more advanced nuclear-weapon States and roughly on par with Britain. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has also expressed concern about Israeli nuclear capabilities in Resolution 17 of September 2009, in

which it ‘calls upon Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards’.

2nd We have to move ahead on the issue of disarmament. The Treaty’s disarmament pillar, embodied in its Article VI, represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty by the nuclear-weapon States to pursue negotiations on general and complete disarmament. In this context, we reaffirm the need to implement the 13 practical steps for disarmament agreed upon in the 2000 NPT Review Conference and welcome Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s proposal for greater accountability and transparency in this area; achieving the goal of a world without nuclear weapons can only be done if the total number of nuclear weapons is known and if the nuclear-weapon States make their disarmament efforts public.

3rd Our joint endeavor to stave off any possible nuclear tragedy in the future should be boosted by further strengthening the international legal system in this regard. Let us work towards the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Let us start negotiations on crucial international instruments such as the Nuclear Weapons Convention and the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). And let us as well devise appropriate mechanisms that could put an end to this odd and unfair situation whereby a few States who reject the NPT continue to reap the benefits of full-fledged nuclear cooperation with complacent countries.

4th Certain measures should be taken at the international stage in order to give some security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States party to the NPT, such as universal adherence to the "no-first-use principle", the gradual departing from the reliance on nuclear weapons in the military doctrines, and the relinquishing of the threat of use of nuclear weapons as a means to advance strategic interests.

Mr. President,

For some, such an agenda may seem idealistic in the current state of affairs. In our view, however, its elements represent but necessary and concrete yardsticks against which we could assess the seriousness of measures meant to salvage the credibility and the relevance of the NPT and, more importantly, to rid the world of the plague of nuclear weapons.

Lebanon is deeply convinced that by moving full steam ahead towards universality and disarmament, the international community will restore the balance between the three pillars of the NPT. As such, Lebanon reaffirms ‘the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination’. The role that peaceful and prudent use of nuclear energy could play in the betterment of the human condition on all levels is not a controversial issue anymore. Hence, Lebanon is among those countries that support the IAEA in its efforts to foster technical cooperation in this domain.

Mr. President,

Allow me to conclude by reiterating my confidence that, under your able guidance, this conference will come to a fruitful conclusion.