

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ms. Tatiana Valovaya,
Secretary General of the Conference on Disarmament
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for me to join you today at this valuable session. We hope that this year's conference will be successful to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons. We also hope that the global cooperation and solidarity shown in response to Covid-19 and its numerous challenges around the world, will serve as a model for continuing with the multilateral approach to the issue of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

The issue of disarmament is essentially a humanitarian issue related to the protection of people. It plays a decisive role in the prevention of crises and armed conflicts and contributes to solving them through serious political dialogue and negotiations instead of the use of weapons. Consequently, the issue of disarmament is not seen as an option, but rather as a necessity whose outcome would benefit all and contribute to building a safer and more secure world.

Regrettably, weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons remain a major concern for humankind as they threaten international peace and security and sustainable development. This requires increased attention from the international community to disarmament issues to preserve gained achievements, to identify areas where progress can be made and to seek compromise solutions.

In this connection, we welcome the agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation to extend the validity of the Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms < New START > as a correct step towards limiting and eliminating the spiral of the nuclear armament.

Mr. president,

On the basis of its obligations relating to maintaining international peace and security and its conviction of the need to support all disarmament endeavours around the world, the State of Qatar pursues a firm and clear national policy on disarmament. To that end, it has acceded to many major international disarmament conventions. In 2004, the State of Qatar established the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons which plays an important role in providing advice to competent governmental authorities, participating in the development and updating of national legislation on weapons of mass

destruction, and in promoting the achievement of the goals contained in the relevant international conventions to which the State is a party. The Committee also participates in the preparation and implementation of awareness-raising programmes on disarmament dimensions, in the organisation of training courses in cooperation with Doha Regional Centre for Training on the Convention on Weapons of Mass Destruction as well as with relevant international organisations, in addition to hosting numerous conferences and seminars on disarmament topics.

Mr. President,

The Middle East faces a major security problem of the presence and use of weapons of mass destruction, which constitutes a real threat that must be addressed and tackled. Therefore, the initiatives to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are among important attempts to address these concerns at the regional and international levels. The success of these initiatives would contribute to security, stability, peace and sustainable development and also enhance the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, particularly in view of regional and international tensions.

In this regard, the State of Qatar expresses its full support for the convening this year of a new session of the United Nations Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. The State also looks forward to the convening of the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in April 2021. We call upon the international community, in particular the sponsors of the 1995 resolution which was primarily related to the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to fulfil their responsibilities and obligations towards the implementation of the 2010 Conference resolutions and the other relevant resolutions.

On the other hand, the State of Qatar reaffirms the inalienable legitimate right of all States, especially developing countries, to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in accordance with the International Atomic Energy Agency's standards and procedures, under its supervision and in line with the comprehensive safeguards system.

The State of Qatar believes in the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as it is the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. Therefore, we call on all Member States to show flexibility and political will to put an end to the stalemate of the conference in reaching a balanced and comprehensive work program that would take into account the security concerns of all States, and which would be consistent with the Conference's rules of procedure.

We also underline that the time has come for the Conference on Disarmament to review the expansion of its membership to be more representative and in line with the rules of procedure. In this context, the State of Qatar reiterates its willingness to become a member of the Conference on Disarmament. To this end, an application to join the Conference was sent to the Secretariat of the Conference in June 2012, and we hope that real progress will be made in this regard.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reaffirms its keenness and commitment to support disarmament negotiations and to fulfil all its obligations in this area, to continue its firm positions and constant calls to maintain international peace and security and to protect mankind from destructive effects of lethal weapons and their harmful effects.

Thank you, Mr. President.