Statement by the Arab Republic of Egypt
76th Session of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly
Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons, Other WMDs, Outer Space and Conventional Weapons

Check Against Delivery

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt aligns itself with the statements made by the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group and the Arab Group, and wishes to make the following remarks:

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. Immediate progress is necessary to restore trust and faith in the current regime. As a first step, the 10th NPT Review Conference has to reconfirm the validity of all previous commitments. We hope that the extension of the New Start Treaty will be a step in the right direction.

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 non-proliferation regime and multilateral norms, as well as the rule of law at the international level.
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 has successfully convened 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 inclusive and consensus-based process. We look forward to the Second Session of the conference in November 2021.

We also count on the continued support of all Member States 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”.

Mr. Chairman,

Outer-space is a shared heritage owned equally by all the peoples of the world, and a common asset for humanity. There is a clear need for a legally binding instrument that would complement the existing international legal framework by preventing an arms race in outer space and filling the existing legal gaps in this area. Such a legally binding instrument should have a prohibition on the placement of any weapons in outer space, armed attacks against satellites or any outer-space assets, intentional harmful interference that interrupts the normal functioning of outer-space assets, and the development of weapons that are specifically designed for attacking outer space assets.
Egypt and Sri Lanka have once more tabled their joint annual resolution entitled “Prevention of an Arms Race in the Outer Space”. We count on the support of all Member States to this important resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the adoption of the outcome document of BMS7 and are looking forward to convening BMS8 in 2022 to elaborate more on issues related to diversion of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients and implement the conclusions of BMS7 especially with regard to establishing the Fellowship program proposed by NAM to offer training to developing countries.

The Middle East and Africa face severe threats due to the increasing illicit flows and intentional transfers of SALW to terrorists and illegal armed groups. Some argued that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was going to be the solution that would stop all illegal flows of conventional arms. In this regard, we reiterate that the ATT’s various shortcomings, especially its lack of clear definitions and criteria, largely undermines its possible effectiveness. We call on the States parties to the ATT to ensure that its implementation is consistent with the UN Charter without any infringement on the rights of States to fulfill their national security and self-defense needs.

Thank you.