

# First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

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## Universalization of the TPNW and the Middle East WMDFZ

### Working paper submitted by the Middle East Treaty Organization

1. In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly took the historic decision to entrust “the Secretary-General with the convening [...] of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.”

2. The inaugural conference, which took place in November 2019 with the participation of 23 of the 24 states of the proposed zone, resulted in a political declaration in which participating states:

(a) Welcome all initiatives, resolutions, decisions and recommendations on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction;

(b) Believe that the establishment of a verifiable Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction would greatly enhance regional and international peace and security;

(c) Declare our intent and solemn commitment to pursue, in accordance with relevant international resolutions, and in an open and inclusive manner with all invited States, the elaboration of a legally binding treaty to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by consensus by the States of the region;

(d) Call upon all States of the Middle East and all other States to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of the objectives of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction;

(e) Convinced that the realization of this long-standing goal would be facilitated by the participation of all States of the Middle East, extend an open-ended invitation to all States of the region to lend their support to the present declaration and to join the process;

(f) In that spirit, believe that the Conference, through the elaboration of a legally binding treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, could contribute to building regional and international confidence therein;

(g) Commit to undertaking efforts to follow up on the declaration and on the outcomes of the Conference and to engaging in preparations for the second session of the Conference, commend the efforts of the Secretary-General in convening the first session of the Conference, and request his continued efforts and those of relevant international organizations and the strong support of the international community towards the success of the Conference in establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

4. In the second conference, which started in November 2021, states agreed to the “Establishment of a working committee to continue deliberations among members of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction during the intersessional period of the Conference”. These intersessional meetings are currently ongoing under the coordination of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

5. Universalization of the TPNW will require the ratification of the treaty or the accession to it of 24 states of the proposed zone. Thus, we call on all States Parties to the TPNW to; acknowledge this historic step forward in Middle East diplomacy, welcome that a process of disarmament has begun, recognise its importance to the universalization of the TPNW, and encourage and support the intersessional work in whatever way possible.

7. Furthermore, in order to bring into reality the aspiration of a nuclear-weapon-free world, we call on all States Parties to the TPNW to join forces and call on all nine states that have manufactured nuclear weapons to commit to a time-line for disarmament.

8. Finally, recalling that United Nations General Assembly resolution 1(1) established a commission of the UN Security Council to ensure “the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction,” we are now 77 years into the nuclear age. It is time to bring this age to an end.

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