United Nations A/CONF.236/2025/3

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 November 2025

Original: English

Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction
Sixth session
New York, 17–21 November 2025

Report of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the work of its sixth session

I. Introduction

1. In its decision 73/546, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene annual sessions of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction for a duration of one week at Headquarters until the conference concluded the elaboration of a legally binding treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

II. Organizational matters and proceedings

1. Opening and duration of the session

2. The sixth session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction was held from 17 to 21 November 2025 at United Nations Headquarters. Twenty-two Members to the Conference, four observer States (China, France, Russian Federation and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and relevant international organizations or entities (International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)) participated in the session. The list of participants is contained in document A/CONF.236/2025/INF/3.

3. The Conference was opened on 17 November 2025 by the President of the sixth session of the Conference, the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, Omar Hilale. The Secretary-General addressed the opening session of the Conference by video message. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs attended the opening session.

Please recycle

2. Agenda and programme of work

4. At its 1st meeting, the Conference adopted the agenda for the sixth session, as contained in document A/CONF.236/2025/1, as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Adoption of the programme of work.
4. Address by the President of the sixth session.
5. Address by the Secretary-General.
6. Credentials of representatives.
7. Decisions on participation of intergovernmental organizations, United Nations organs and non-governmental organizations.
8. General debate.
9. Work of the working committee.
10. Thematic debate.
11. Consideration and adoption of the report.
12. Endorsement of the President of the seventh session.
13. Any other business.
14. Closure of the session.

5. At the same meeting, the Conference adopted the programme of work for the session (A/CONF.236/2025/2).

3. Attendance of relevant international organizations, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations

6. At its 1st meeting, the Conference decided to invite a number of intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations to attend public meetings of the sixth session as observers (see A/CONF.236/2025/DEC.1 and A/CONF.236/2025/DEC.2).

4. Documentation

7. The documentation of the Conference is available on the website of the Conference (https://meetings.unoda.org/me-nwmdfz/conference-on-the-establishment-of-a-middle-east-zone-free-of-nuclear-weapons-and-other-weapons-of-mass-destruction-sixth-session-2025).

III. Credentials

8. The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers, to be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, were submitted to the Secretary-General of the Conference, who, having examined the credentials received, noted that:

(a) Formal credentials in due form had been received for the representatives of the following Members to the Conference: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.

(b) Provisional credentials for the representatives of the following Members to the Conference had been communicated by means of email, the e-deleGATE portal, a note verbale or a letter from the permanent missions in New York: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

(c) Credentials or other information concerning their representatives had not been received from the following Members to the Conference: Comoros, Israel and Somalia.

9. On the proposal of the Secretary-General of the Conference, the Conference agreed to accept the credentials of all the States referred to in paragraph 8 (a) and (b) above, on the understanding that the originals of the credentials of the representatives of those States referred to in paragraph 8 (b), as well as those of the representatives of those States referred to in paragraph 8 (c), where applicable, would be submitted as soon as possible.

IV. General debate

10. The Conference commenced the general debate at its 1st meeting and continued the general debate at its 2nd meeting. At its 1st meeting, the Conference heard statements by Kuwait (also on behalf of the States Member of the Gulf Cooperation Council), Mauritania, Qatar, Jordan, Libya, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen, Egypt, the State of Palestine, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Djibouti and Somalia.

11. At its 2nd meeting, the Conference heard statements by the representatives of the Russian Federation, China, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, IAEA, OPCW.

12. The right of reply was exercised by the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran at the end of the 2nd meeting.

13. Members to the Conference expressed their appreciation to the Secretary-General, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Office for Disarmament Affairs (secretariat of the Conference) for their continued and reliable support for the work of the Conference.

14. Members to the Conference expressed their appreciation to States that had provided financial support for the Conference process and encouraged increased financial and technical resources to be made available to the Conference and its activities.

15. Members to the Conference also took note of the participation of the observer States, namely, China, France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and international organizations that had consistently participated in the work of the Conference. Members to the Conference noted with appreciation the participation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations through a recorded message, as well as the in-person presence of the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Members to the Conference regretted the absence of the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapons Convention and requests that the President of the Conference formally communicate their disappointment in this regard.

16. Members to the Conference identified as a key challenge the continued absence of Israel from the sessions. They noted with regret that the United States of America was the only invited observer State that had not yet attended. To address that challenge, Members to the Conference request successive Presidents, in accordance with the authority conferred on them, or through their designees, to undertake the following:

(a) To convene meetings with the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide updates on recent Conference developments and encourage their continued support, including efforts in support of the full and active participation of the absent Member and observer in the Conference;

(b) To report periodically to the Conference on their efforts.

17. Members to the Conference invited the Secretary-General to include in his annual reports on the annual sessions of the Conference the efforts mentioned in paragraph 16 (a).

18. Several delegations recalled the conclusions of the meeting of the Senior Officials Committee of the League of Arab States held in Cairo in January 2024, which included the formation of an open-ended contact group tasked with communicating with the absent Member to the Conference and observer States.

19. Members to the Conference commended the initiatives undertaken by the Moroccan presidency, including: the first joint statement by Members to the Conference, delivered at the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the convening of a briefing on progress of the Conference at the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference; and the joint submission to the "Comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects" and encouraged future presidencies to continue to undertake these initiatives.

20. Members to the Conference also commended Jordan for hosting the meeting of the working committee held from 12 to 14 May 2025 in Amman and encouraged the recurrence of the practice in the future.

21. Members to the Conference welcomed the solid progress achieved by the Conference and its working committee on both procedural and substantive matters. They recognized the positive impact of the decision aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the working committee of the Conference, which had contributed to enhancing the richness of the discussions and the effectiveness of the work of the Conference. Members to the Conference stressed the need to ensure the participation of all States in the region, as well as that of observer States, and underlined their commitment to ensuring the continued open, inclusive and transparent character of the Conference. Members to the Conference agreed to continue to pursue a systemic and incremental substantive approach to addressing the elements of the aspired zone and to elaborate common understandings and building blocks that can support the negotiation of a legally binding instrument establishing the zone.

22. Members to the Conference underlined the importance of the ongoing process to update the comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 79/241 and the attention it gave to establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not yet exist, including in the Middle East. They welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General of an expert from the region to the qualified group of experts tasked with the new study and expressed their commitment and readiness to follow its work in support of the objectives of the Conference.

23. Members to the Conference emphasized the importance and validity of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which provided the basis for the indefinite extension of the Treaty, as well as other relevant outcomes of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons until their objective of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is fully achieved. They called for the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and reaffirmed that the Conference is not a substitute for that resolution. They also stressed that the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction was a shared international responsibility that must be supported and operationalized in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991), both adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Members to the Conference expressed their expectation that the outcome document of the upcoming Review Conference accord the necessary attention and support to the full and effective implementation of the 1995 resolution.

24. Members to the Conference, in the light of the current stalemate in the disarmament regime and the failure of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to achieve tangible progress on implementing the commitment to establish the zone, emphasized their determination to continue to promote the effective implementation of the objectives of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime and looked forward to the success of the upcoming Review Conference in adopting a balanced and comprehensive outcome document that prioritizes the implementation of agreed obligations, foremost among them nuclear disarmament, achieving universality of the Treaty and the establishment of the Middle East nuclear weapon-free zone.

25. Members to the Conference unequivocally condemned all rhetoric threatening the use of nuclear weapons, including that by Israeli officials in 2023 against Gaza and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The participating Members unequivocally condemned these alarming statements, deplored the severe risk that they posed to regional and international peace and security and called for the United Nations and the Security Council to take action to ensure accountability for the threats. They underscored that the nuclear threats clearly demonstrated the urgent and indispensable need to establish a Middle East zone that was free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

26. Members to the Conference condemned the brutal war by Israel on Gaza and Lebanon and its attacks on Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Yemen and Qatar and called for the United Nations and the Security Council to take action to ensure accountability for these attacks. Members to the Conference welcomed the developments regarding the Gaza ceasefire plan announced on 29 September and endorsed in the Gaza Peace Summit, held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 13 October 2025. Several Members to the Conference commended the constructive role played by the United States, Qatar, Egypt and Türkiye in facilitating the ceasefire and called on Israel to cease its violations of the ceasefire and for the immediate and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid.

27. Members to the Conference recalled the statement of the non-aligned movement, mentioning its categorical and strong condemnation and denunciation of the wanton, unprovoked and premeditated heinous attack by Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran, perpetrated from 13 to 24 June 2025, as well as the deliberate targeting of the IAEA-safeguarded peaceful nuclear facilities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. They stressed that these reprehensible unlawful attacks not only constitute a

flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the fundamental principles of international law, including sovereignty, territorial integrity and the prohibition of threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of States, as well as the IAEA Statute, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the Security Council and IAEA resolutions, but also pose a grave threat to the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to the integrity of the entire safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

28. Members to the Conference emphasized that the refusal by Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon Party and subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to a comprehensive safeguards agreement with IAEA represented a significant threat to regional and international peace and security. The refusal undermined the credibility of the non-proliferation regime and imposed additional burdens on regional States that were taking concrete and credible steps to promote peace and security. Members to the Conference called upon Israel to join without delay the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon Party and to expeditiously subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to a comprehensive safeguards agreement with IAEA, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

29. Members to the Conference reaffirmed their inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear, biological and chemical materials and technology without discrimination and emphasized that the future treaty should ensure that its Members could fully enjoy that right within their respective legal obligations and without any restrictions or obstacles, or politicization.

30. Members to the Conference underscored the rising complexities of global security conditions and that confidence-building and nuclear risk reduction efforts were not an alternative to effective, complete, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures and must not be a pretext for delaying the initiation of such measures, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nuclear disarmament must be undertaken transparently and sustainably under international control and verification and in accordance with a specific and measurable timetable. Concerns were expressed regarding the unprecedented and alarming nuclear arms race, the decades-long failure of nuclear-weapon States to meet their disarmament obligations and commitments, the renewal and modernization of nuclear arsenals by nuclear-weapon States and their engaging in nuclear sharing arrangements that directly contradicted their non-proliferation obligations.

V. Work of the working committee

31. At the 3rd meeting, the President of the sixth session and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, Omar Hilale, presented the summary of the work of the working committee in 2025, which is contained in the annex to the present report, as an informal document.

32. Members to the Conference expressed their appreciation to Morocco for its leadership in conducting the work of the working committee during the intersessional period and for the discussion papers presented by the presidency.

VI. Thematic debate

33. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, the Conference held a thematic debate. Members to the Conference exchanged views on the following topics: (a) negative security assurances; (b) cooperation, consultation and clarification and dispute settlement; and (c) promotion of cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Middle East Conference.

34. The thematic debate was organized on the basis of agreed topics proposed by the President, with topics being addressed on a rolling basis. The deliberations proceeded with the understanding that any Members to the Conference could raise any additional topics for the thematic debate and could also supplement or consolidate their views on those issues at any time. Members to the Conference expressed their respective positions on the thematic topics, put forward proposals and engaged in interactive discussions.

35. Members to the Conference recalled the outcomes of the previous sessions of the Conference.

Negative security assurances

36. Members to the Conference emphasized that effective, irrevocable, universal, legally binding, non-discriminatory and unconditional negative security assurances provided by nuclear-weapon States are indispensable elements for ensuring the credibility and the integrity of the future Middle East zone and should be elaborated in a dedicated protocol to the future treaty. Through the protocol, nuclear-weapon States would commit to respecting the denuclearized status of the zone and undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any member of the future zone. Members to the Conference underscored that Nuclear Weapon States are required to refrain from preconditions, reservations or interpretative declarations with regard to their accession to these protocols.

37. Members to the Conference noted the discussions in 2024 and 2025 in subsidiary body 4 of the Conference on Disarmament, coordinated by Egypt, on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

38. Members to the Conference stressed the importance of learning from the experiences and best practices of the existing five nuclear-weapon-free zones with regard to the negotiation and implementation of negative security assurance protocols, including the current negotiations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty. Many Members to the Conference also considered that the United Nations, specialized agencies and regional organizations can play an important role in supporting dialogue and providing technical and legal expertise for the negotiation of negative security assurances.

39. Members to the Conference considered that negative security assurances are not a substitute for nuclear disarmament but only an interim measure pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

40. A number of Members to the Conference expressed the view that unique characteristics of the Middle East region may require the Conference to take into consideration the engagement with States that are not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty from outside the region.

41. A number of Members to the Conference expressed the view that the negative security assurance protocol should apply to the entire zone of application of the future treaty. A view was expressed that the future treaty must reaffirm the obligations

contained in Article I and II of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

42. Members to the Conference noted that nuclear-weapon-State may provide, in writing, their views on the matter of a negative security assurance protocol to the future treaty establishing the Middle East zone.

43. A view was expressed that the treaty should include a mechanism for regular monitoring and verification of the compliance of nuclear-weapon States with their commitments under a negative security assurance protocol.

44. A view was expressed that Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), General Assembly resolution 3472 (XXX) B, the 1999 Disarmament Commission principles and guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, noting that they could provide as a good basis for discussions on negative security assurances within the Conference.

Cooperation, consultation and clarification, and dispute settlement

45. Members to the Conference recognized the importance of cooperation, consultation and clarification mechanisms in resolving disputes related to the interpretation of and compliance with the future treaty, as well as procedural concerns, and emerging regional developments that may affect its implementation. They also emphasized the role of these mechanisms in building trust and enhancing transparency among Parties to the future treaty by promoting cooperative means to address potential compliance concerns and preventing the recourse to further measures under the treaty.

46. Members to the Conference emphasized the need for clear timelines and the sequencing of actions and measures under the future treaty's cooperation, consultation and clarification mechanism.

47. Some Members to the Conference expressed the view that the future treaty could establish a designated body for oversight and coordination of the cooperation, consultation and clarification mechanism. This designated body could be responsible for receiving and relaying requests for clarification, facilitate bilateral or multilateral consultation and establish, where required, fact-finding missions in coordination with the competent specialized agencies. A view was expressed that the design of a cooperation, consultation and clarification mechanism will depend on the verification measures agreed in the future treaty.

48. Some Members to the Conference expressed the view that the future treaty could establish a designated body for oversight and coordination of the cooperation, consultation and clarification mechanism. This designated body could be responsible for receiving and relaying requests for clarification and facilitate bilateral or multilateral consultation.

49. Some Members to the Conference expressed the view that the designated body could consider establishing, where required, a fact-finding mission in coordination with the competent specialized agencies. They indicated that the fact-finding mission would have to operate with full respect for national sovereignty, follow a clearly defined mandate and include technical experts from the region alongside international experts from specialized agencies. Other Members expressed the view that this proposal would require further consideration and detailed study.

50. A number of Members to the Conference stressed that measures such as referrals of disputes to the International Court of Justice or another mutually agreed arbitration mechanism should be taken only once all other cooperation, consultation and clarification measures had been exhausted.

51. Some Members to the Conference underlined their intention to continue to identify and document areas of convergence in the outcomes of the Conference and the working committee, which served as building blocks for continued discussion and further consensus, including on areas of divergence, without prejudice to the positions of the Members to the Conference at a later stage. The view was also expressed that such documentation could serve as travaux préparatoires to aid in clarifying the intentions and rationale of treaty texts elaborated in the future.

52. Members to the Conference also recognized the importance of learning from the experiences and best practices of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones in developing cooperation, consultation and clarification and dispute settlement mechanisms for the future treaty. Another view noted was that the future treaty might require additional confidence-building measures, transparency and verification, as well as regional cooperation provisions tailored to the Middle East context, provided that such measures supported the shared objective of establishing a credible, durable and effectively verifiable zone. Several Members to the Conference recognized the role of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements in enhancing trust and transparency in the continued peaceful nature of nuclear programmes, as the universal standard for verification of peaceful uses. Some views were expressed that the IAEA additional protocol was a critical measure to strengthen the safeguards systems and provide a higher level of confidence that all nuclear materials and facilities remained peaceful in nature. Many delegations underlined the voluntary nature of the instrument and the fact that accession thereto was within the sovereign discretion of States.

Promotion of cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Middle East Conference

53. Members to the Conference recognized the value in learning from the experiences of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, their negotiation processes and implementation.

54. With a view to enhancing cooperation between existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Conference, many Members to the Conference put forward proposals on possible avenues for such cooperation. These included the establishment of regular exchanges and briefings, the organization of capacity-building workshops and technical study visits with the existing States Members of nuclear-weapon-free zones and their secretariats, establishing an annual United Nations-mandated platform in the form of a one-day symposium or workshop for dialogue and cooperation among existing and prospect zones and a fellowship programme for representatives of States Member of existing and prospective nuclear-weapon-free zones.

55. Members to the Conference also recognized the potential benefits of diplomatic coordination, as appropriate, among existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and Members to the Conference in increasing international support for the Conference and strengthening their common positions on issues of mutual interest, through joint statements at relevant disarmament forums and joint advocacy efforts to encourage nuclear-weapon States to adhere to nuclear-weapon-free zone protocols and withdraw interpretative declarations and reservations. In this regard, Members to the Conference welcomed the joint statement, delivered by Morocco, on behalf of Members to the Conference, at the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In this vein, a view was expressed that the Conference was contributing to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts at a time when other efforts were in decline.

56. Members to the Conference also welcomed the joint submission by Members to the Conference, coordinated by Morocco, entitled “Comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects” and called for further

engagement with the work of the qualified group of experts to prepare a comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

57. A number of Members to the Conference called for the early convening of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which was originally planned to be held on 24 April 2020.

58. A proposal was also made on Members to the Conference engaging with civil society organizations from nuclear-weapon-free zones.

59. Some Members to the Conference agreed that, in line with rule 34 (4) of the rules of procedure of the Conference and bearing in mind the applicable practices and modalities, the accredited non-governmental organizations to the Conference may deliver general statements after the conclusion of the general debate and in an informal session.

60. The deliberations of the Conference are without prejudice to the positions of Members to the Conference at a later stage, nor do they prejudge the outcome of the work of the Conference on any issue.

VII. Endorsement of the President of the seventh session

61. At the 9th meeting, pursuant to decision A/CONF.236/2023/DEC.3, adopted at the fourth session of the Conference, and in accordance with rule 5 (1) of the rules of procedure of the Conference, as contained in document A/CONF.236/2023/1, Members to the Conference endorsed by acclamation Oman as President of the seventh session and invited the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations, Omar Said Omar Al Kathiri, to preside over the Conference. Mr. Al Kathiri addressed the Conference following his endorsement.

62. Members to the Conference congratulated Mr. Al Kathiri on having assumed the presidency of the seventh session of the Conference.

VIII. Preparations for the seventh session

63. The Conference decided that it would hold its seventh session from 16 to 20 November 2026 at United Nations Headquarters.

64. The Conference agreed that the President, in consultation with Members to the Conference, should undertake efforts to prepare for the seventh session. Members to the Conference urged all those Members, observers and relevant international organizations invited in General Assembly decision 73/546 to attend the seventh session of the Conference to provide their constructive contribution and to help to further the process.

Annex

Summary of the work of the working committee of the sixth session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in 2025

Introduction

1. At its sixth session, the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction agreed that the 2025 working committee address the following topics: (a) negative security assurances; (b) cooperation, consultation and clarification and dispute settlement; and (c) promotion of cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Conference, in the intersessional period of the Conference.

2. The working committee, established in the Conference decision contained in document A/CONF.236/2021/DEC.3, is mandated to undertake deliberations on issues related to the mandate of the Conference, as contained in General Assembly decision 73/546, on the basis of the outcomes of each annual session of the Conference.

3. The deliberations of the working committee and the interaction between Members to the Conference and the invited experts, are without prejudice to the positions of the Members to the Conference at a later stage of negotiations, nor do they prejudge the outcome of the work of the Conference on relevant issues.

Conduct of the working committee

4. The working committee held three meetings in 2025. Morocco, in its capacity as President of the sixth session of the Conference, chaired the meetings.

5. At its 1st meeting, held in New York on 21 January 2025, the working committee discussed the organizational aspects of its work. It was decided that two substantive meetings would be held in March and May 2025, respectively, to address the three topics mandated by the Conference at its sixth session and would follow the format of the previous working committee's meetings of presentations by invited experts, followed by interactive discussions among Members to the Conference and with the invited experts.

6. At the 2nd meeting of the working committee, held in New York from 19 to 21 March 2025, Members to the Conference discussed: (a) negative security assurances; and (b) cooperation, consultation and clarification and dispute settlement; presentations were given by experts invited to the meeting.

7. The following experts participated in the second meeting of the working committee, held from 19 to 21 March 2025:

(a) Michael Spies, (Office for Disarmament Affairs – Geneva);

(b) Andrey Baklitsky (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR));

(c) Eduardo Alcibiades Sanchez-Kiesslich (Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations);

(d) Linda Kesse Antwi (Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations);

(e) Jasmine Auda (Ambit Advisory);

(f) Azril Abd Aziz (ASEAN Political-Security Community Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia);

(g) Gholamhossein Dehghani (researcher in the field of disarmament and international security, Islamic Republic of Iran);

(h) Nuno Luzio (IAEA);

(i) Daniel Feakes (Implementation Support Unit, Biological Weapons Convention;

(j) Ralf Trapp (Chemical and Biological Weapons Network).

8. At its 3rd meeting, held from 12 to 14 May 2025 in Amman, the working committee discussed the promotion of cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Conference, and presentations were given by representatives of States Parties and secretariats of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as relevant experts invited to the meeting.

9. The following experts participated in the third meeting of the Working Committee held from 12 to 14 May 2025:

(a) Martha Mariana Mendoza Basulto (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL));

(b) Shivanand Sivamohan (Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations);

(c) Nuno Luzio (IAEA);

(d) Felicia Yuwono (Directorate of International Security and Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia);

(e) Elena Sokova (Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation);

(f) Jasmine Auda (Ambit Advisory);

(g) Gholamhossein Dehghani (researcher in the field of disarmament and international security, Islamic Republic of Iran);

(h) Jacob Prado (Embassy of Mexico to Jordan);

(i) Roberto Szatmari (Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations);

(j) Nasser bin Nasser (UNIDIR);

(k) Amnah Ibrahim (Gulf Cooperation Council Emergency Management Center);

(l) Nesreen Alhmoud (Royal Scientific Society, Jordan).

10. As agreed, a number of experts, drawn from a list approved by Members to the Conference, were invited, to give briefings to the working committee on the specified topics on the agenda of its meetings, in their personal capacities.

Negative security assurances

11. The President prepared a discussion paper on the topic of negative security assurances, which was circulated to participating States prior to the 2nd meeting of the working committee.

12. The working committee emphasized that effective, irrevocable, non-discriminatory and unconditional negative security assurances are indispensable for the establishment and maintenance of the integrity of the future Middle East zone. Negative security assurances should be provided by nuclear-weapon States through their signature and

ratification of the relevant protocol to the future zone treaty without any interpretive declarations or reservations. A proposal was made to establish a dedicated subsidiary body within the preparatory committees for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to assess the current status of negative security assurances, including unilateral declarations, Security Council resolutions and the protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zones and identify existing gaps that undermine the effectiveness of these assurances and which could also support the negotiations of the Conference with nuclear-weapon States on negative security assurances.

13. Experts from the Office for Disarmament Affairs in Geneva, in its capacity as the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, gave briefings to the Committee on the discussions on negative security assurances. They provided an overview of past discussions in relevant multilateral forums on questions relating to the scope, eligibility, conditionality and credibility of existing assurances, including the impact of reservations and interpretive statements. The experts emphasized the importance of transparency by nuclear-weapon States as to their nuclear weapon stockpiles, policies and steps taken on nuclear disarmament, as well as consistency in the security assurances that they offer.

14. The committee also heard presentations on negative security assurance provisions in the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Pelindaba, as well on considerations for negative security assurances under the future Middle East treaty. Representatives from States Parties to the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Pelindaba stressed the need for clarity in formulating negative security assurance provisions. They recalled recent efforts by nuclear-weapon-free zones to engage nuclear-weapon States with a view to having them review their interpretative statements and suggested that there was willingness among some nuclear-weapon States to better understand the concerns of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the matter.

15. Several Members to the Conference expressed the view that the unilateral declarations provided by nuclear-weapon States, such as those made in the context of Security Council resolution 984 (1995), are insufficient. Several Members to the Conference held that the declaratory statements given by nuclear-weapon States upon ratification of protocols on negative security assurances undermine the protocol's effectiveness and disincentivize new regions from pursuing the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones. A view was expressed that the Conference could proactively engage nuclear-weapon States, as observers to the Conference, and hear their views on the matter.

16. The committee discussed recommendations to facilitate the ratification of the negative security assurance protocol to the future Middle East treaty and ways to foster cooperation between existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Conference on addressing negative security assurance declaratory statements by nuclear-weapon States. Experts emphasized the importance of transparency, and sustained diplomatic engagement with nuclear-weapon States, as well as engagement with nuclear-weapon-free zone States Parties and secretariats to coordinate positions when negotiating with nuclear-weapon States.

Cooperation, consultation and clarification, and dispute settlement

17. The President prepared a discussion paper on the topic of cooperation, consultation and clarification and dispute settlement, which was circulated to participating States prior to the 2nd meeting of the working committee.

18. The committee heard presentations by representatives of IAEA, the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapons Convention and a

representative from a State Party to the Treaty of Bangkok, as well as other international and regional experts on the topics of cooperation, consultation and clarification and dispute settlement in nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and other relevant multilateral instruments. The committee also discussed relevant practical cases and considerations for the future Middle East zone treaty. Members to the Conference considered different forms under which these provisions are operationalized in these treaties, including:

(a) Direct bilateral or multilateral consultations among concerned parties;

(b) Facilitated consultations by designated bodies (e.g. the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapons Convention) or at meetings of States Parties and Review Conferences. Offering technical assistance by the treaty body to provide clarification on obligations;

(c) Voluntary transparency visits;

(d) Requesting fact-finding missions, in cooperation with a competent authority (e.g. IAEA).

19. The committee recognized the importance of cooperation, consultation and clarification mechanisms in resolving disputes related to the interpretation of and compliance with the future treaty. They emphasized the role of these mechanisms in building trust among Parties to a treaty by promoting cooperative means to address potential compliance concerns and preventing the escalation to confrontational measures.

20. The committee acknowledged the complementarity between existing dispute settlement mechanisms in relevant multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments and possible arrangements that could be included in a future nuclear-weapon- and weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone treaty, while avoiding duplication in this regard. The committee discussed potential approaches to dispute settlement in the future treaty that are suited to the regional context, including the deciding on the order of measures. Several States supported the inclusion of provisions on arbitration, including through referral to the International Court of Justice, while emphasizing the need to prioritize cooperative measures in resolving disputes before resorting to confrontational measures, such as arbitration by third parties.

21. A Member to the Conference expressed the view that the future treaty should establish a designated body for oversight and coordination. This designated body would, among other responsibilities, facilitate the implementation of cooperation, consultation and clarification and dispute settlement provisions and coordinate with international organizations.

22. Several Members to the Conference recognized the link between verification mechanisms, peaceful settlement of disputes mechanisms and cooperation, consultation and clarification provisions, emphasizing that robust verification and peaceful settlement of disputes regimes enhance the effectiveness of cooperation, consultation and clarification mechanisms and their implementation.

Promotion of cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Middle East Conference

23. The President prepared a discussion paper on the topic of the promotion of cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Conference, which was circulated to participating States prior to the 2nd meeting of the working committee.

24. The committee heard presentations by representatives from States Parties on the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Bangkok and by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) on best practices and challenges that the States had encountered during the negotiation of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, as well as lessons learned from negotiating protocols on negative security assurances with nuclear-weapon States. The presentations highlighted the role of legal precision and transparency in ensuring a balance between the security arrangements of each State in the zone and ensuring that such arrangements are consistent with obligations under the future nuclear-weapon- and weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone treaty.

25. Members to the Conference recognized the value in learning from the experiences of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and their negotiation processes and implementation while considering the distinct characteristics of every respective region including its security environment and challenges. A proposal was made that discussions with representatives of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones could be included inworking committee meetings.

26. The committee also heard presentations by representatives from Brazil and Mexico on the planned "Comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects". Members to the Conference considered that the study was an opportunity to reflect on the prospects for establishing the Middle East Zone, including the challenges and pathways to advancing progress. The study would also help identify ways of strengthening cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones and the future Middle East zone. Members to the Conference stressed the importance of their active engagement in the study and discussed submitting a possible joint contribution to its work. Members to the Conference also called for equitable geographic representation in the composition of the group of qualified experts that would undertake the study, with adequate representation of experts from the Middle East.

27. The committee also heard presentations by experts from IAEA, UNIDIR, the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, the Gulf Cooperation Council Emergency Management Center, and the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan on the role of regional and international organizations in facilitating and promoting cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones.

28. The committee recognized the importance of cooperation with nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing the work of the Conference and identifying other shared objectives. They emphasized the need to explore ways to strengthen this cooperation and engage States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zones in the work of the Conference and underscored the role of international organizations, such as the United Nations and IAEA, in facilitating such cooperation. Several Members to the Conference put forward proposals to this end and discussed possible avenues for collaboration. This included inviting States Parties and the secretariats of nuclear-weapon-free zones to attend the Conference and deliver statements at the opening meetings of its annual sessions on a regular basis and coordinating positions between Members to the Conference and States Parties to nuclear-weapon-free zones on issues of mutual interest in relevant forums, such as the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission and at meetings of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and meetings of their Preparatory Committees. Several Members to the Conference called for revitalizing the Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, at which could be discussed, inter alia, the review and ratification of negative security assurance protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zones and the further development of compliance and verification practices.

29. The committee highlighted the role of the Conference in building technical capacity in the region and promoting expert exchange. It underscored the importance of education and knowledge transfer to leverage the experiences of nuclear-weapon-free zones to strengthen cooperation, support the work of the Conference and establish the technical foundation for ongoing negotiations within the Conference. Several proposals in this regard called for the organization of joint initiatives for capacity-building with the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including a knowledge transfer consortium, expert networks, fellowships and technical visits.

30. Members to the Conference and invited experts visited the International Centre for Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) – a unique model of regional cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology among eight States in the Middle East. Members to the Conference toured the facility and heard presentations by the Administrative Director of SESAME, Atef Elkadime and Chairman of the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission and Director of SESAME, Khaled Toukan.