

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

I now wish to address the issue of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Egypt has consistently striven to spare this region fraught with tension from the scourge of a possible recourse to any type of weapon of mass destruction. The accumulation of such weapons in the Middle East creates a destabilizing environment that endangers international peace and security.

Egypt has, since 1974, annually presented to the United Nations General Assembly a resolution calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Since 1980 that resolution has been adopted by the General Assembly by consensus. Last year a group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General submitted a study. It is relevant to recall the conclusion contained in paragraph 110 of that study that "an effective zone would be a great improvement over the present situation. The problem is how to create the conditions in which a zone becomes a realistic development."

On 8 April 1990, President Hosni Mubarak proposed the establishment of a "zone free from weapons of mass destruction" in the Middle East. The three components of President Mubarak's proposal are the following: First, that all weapons of mass destruction without exception should be prohibited in the Middle East, nuclear, chemical or biological; second, that all States of the region without exception make an equal and reciprocal commitment in this regard; third, that verification measures and modalities be established to ascertain full compliance by all States in the region with the full scope of that prohibition without exception.

This initiative provides the appropriate framework for engaging States in the region in a process that would ultimately facilitate the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, and ensure regional collective accession through the encouragement of all States in the region to adhere to the international legal instruments that comprise the juridical regimes regulating weapons of mass destruction. These legal instruments are the non-proliferation Treaty, the biological weapons Convention of 1972 and the chemical weapons convention which is under preparation now at the CD. The successful employment of confidence-building measures in the Middle East will undoubtedly be augmented through the adherence of all parties in the region to these three important legal instruments.

Proposals on chemical and biological weapons relating to the region should be considered by these States within this framework. Egypt would like to reaffirm that disarmament measures relating to the different weapons of mass destruction cannot be taken in isolation, and that all the States of the region should be legally bound by the same obligations without any exception.

At this juncture, I am pleased to invite the attention of the CD to a letter dated 21 July 1991 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, concerning the recent proposals on arms limitation and disarmament in the Middle East. This letter was reproduced on 30 July 1991 as an official document of the General Assembly (A/46/329) and the Security Council (S/22855). May I request the circulation of this document as an official document of the CD?