

# General Conference

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## Fifty-fourth regular session

# Plenary

## Record of the Tenth Meeting

*Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Friday, 24 September 2010, at 3.45 p.m.*

**President:** Mr ENKHSAIKHAN (Mongolia)

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<sup>1</sup> GC(54)/16.

**Abbreviations used in this record**

NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone

## **20. Israeli nuclear capabilities (continued)** (GC(54)/14 and Add.1, GC(54)/L.2)

1. Mr SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in explanation of vote, said that the agenda item on Israeli nuclear capabilities dealt with a serious security concern affecting the Middle East and the whole world. All nuclear activities of the Zionist regime should be subjected to Agency safeguards, as had been recommended for all countries in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.
2. Unfortunately, international demands had gone unanswered. Israel's failure to accede to the NPT was the only obstacle to universal application of that treaty and the creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East. The double standards demonstrated by Israel's allies in the debate on the draft resolution voted on during the previous meeting would inevitably have a negative impact on the universality of the non-proliferation regime.
3. The Israeli regime's aggressive practices and its defiance of over 100 resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and other bodies gave rise to serious concern. The Agency must take a firm stand and ensure the prompt implementation of all relevant resolutions if its credibility was not to be seriously jeopardized. The pressure exerted by certain Member States must not be allowed to succeed.
4. Even though the draft resolution had been narrowly rejected, all peace-loving people of the world admired the sustained determination of the sponsors, who had resisted the intensive lobbying of Israel and its allies, especially the United States of America. All those who had supported the draft resolution in the interests of peace in the Middle East and the world at large were to be commended. The actions of the United States and its allies, on the other hand, showed that those countries were not putting into practice the fine words they had uttered in support of the NPT. By their actions, they had undermined the unanimous adoption of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The fact that over 100 countries had resisted the pressure exerted by the United States constituted a major setback for that country's foreign policy. Those countries were to be congratulated on their persistence in a noble cause.
5. Mr TAN York Chor (Singapore), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country's abstention had been due not to doubts about the content of the draft resolution, but to doubts about the value of adopting a resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities at present. After 15 years, the States parties to the NPT had at last managed to agree on the convening, in 2012, of a conference to discuss the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The path ahead would not be an easy one; all parties would have to show prudence.
6. The resumption of direct talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders — a crucial first step towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East — was a positive but fragile development. His country did not believe that adoption of the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities would have encouraged all the countries of the Middle East to participate in the 2012 conference.
7. Ms DAVIDSDÓTTIR (Iceland), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country, a strong supporter of nuclear non-proliferation efforts, would like all States to be parties to the NPT. However, Iceland had not supported the draft resolution, since it had been aimed at just one country.
8. Mr RECKER (Belgium), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the Member States of the European Union, which had voted against the draft resolution, said that the European Union's position

had been widely publicized, inter alia by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, in a letter to the League of Arab States, in which she had stated that pursuing a non-consensual approach, such as that taken in the draft resolution, would not further the progress made at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and could only undermine the Agency's ability to contribute to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

9. The situation had changed following the successful conclusion of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The current session of the General Conference - the first major meeting dealing with nuclear non-proliferation issues since the Review Conference - provided an excellent opportunity to work together to implement the Review Conference's recommendations. The European Union continued to believe that a consensual approach was the best way to make progress towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference and the recommendations of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, including the convening of a conference on the Middle East in 2012.

10. The European Union had consistently advocated universal adherence to agreements on arms control and disarmament and on the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. It called upon all States in the Middle East to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols with the Agency. It also called upon all States that were not parties to the NPT to comply with its provisions and with relevant Security Council, General Conference and Board of Governors resolutions, as a crucial contribution to improvement in the security situation in the Middle East.

11. Mr STACEY MORENO (Ecuador), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution in accordance with its principle of encouraging universal adherence to the NPT and the Agency's safeguards system. It hoped that further progress would be made towards peace in the Middle East and that the conference to be held in 2012 would be a success.

12. Ms YPARRAGUIRRE (Philippines), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country had voted in favour of the draft resolution because of its commitment to universal adherence to the NPT. The Philippines hoped that further progress would soon be made in the implementation of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, including the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

13. Mr KHULLAR (India), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had abstained because the draft resolution dealt with issues which were unconnected with the mandate of the Agency.

14. Ms PHETCHARATANA (Thailand) said that, although her delegation had abstained in the vote, her country still advocated universal adherence to the NPT and the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Her country greatly appreciated the efforts currently being made to promote peace in that region, especially the recently resumed direct talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders, and urged all parties to work together constructively.

15. Mr CHOREV (Israel) said that his delegation welcomed the rejection of the draft resolution, which had served no valuable purpose. The majority of delegations had demonstrated their wish to keep alive the prospects for common efforts to promote peace and security in the Middle East, and also to maintain the credibility of the Agency. It was to be hoped that the vote had conveyed a clear message to the sponsors of the draft resolution and that the positive spirit shown at the General Conference's current session would prevail in the years to come. For its part, his country would do its utmost to promote dialogue.

16. Mr DAVIES (United States of America) expressed satisfaction at the rejection of the draft resolution. The vote had not created winners or losers, but had preserved the opportunity for progress towards peace in the Middle East, which, surely, every delegation present wished to promote. Member States should set aside the divisiveness that had characterized the discussions under the current agenda item and begin working together. The rejection of the draft resolution left Member States in a stronger position to pursue the noble goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, but much work remained to be done in the coming weeks and months. His country stood ready, with renewed determination, to face the obstacles ahead.

17. Mr AMARSANAA (Mongolia), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country believed that the General Conference should send a positive signal in support of attainment of a noble objective — namely, the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East — and of the convening of a conference in 2012 to that end. Mongolia had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution, which, in its view, did not convey such a signal.

18. Mr NAKANE (Japan), speaking in explanation of vote, said that for many years his country had been urging all States which had not yet done so, including Israel, to accede to the NPT and conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol. It had therefore supported the draft resolution on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(54)/L.1), which dealt with the same issues as the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities. However, his country had not considered that the latter draft resolution would contribute to the implementation of the action plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference or the convening of the 2012 conference, and it had therefore voted against it.

19. Japan hoped that all the States concerned would build up mutual confidence through dialogue and achieve the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East without further delay.

20. Mr UZCÁTEGUI DUQUE (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country supported the aspiration of Arab States to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East. Israel, the only State in the region which had not acceded to the NPT, must renounce nuclear weapons, accede to that treaty without delay and submit all its nuclear facilities to the Agency's safeguards system. There must be a complete ban on the transfer of nuclear material, technology and expertise to Israel.

21. His delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, which related to a priority issue for the General Conference. The Israeli nuclear programme posed a major threat to international peace and security, and Israel's failure to accede to the NPT was an impediment to the establishment of a global safeguards regime. His delegation regretted that a certain group of countries was defending Israel, thus preventing the Agency from fully exercising its verification function in the Middle East. The entire international community should work for the establishment of an NWFZ in that region — an objective in the attainment of which the Agency had a crucial role to play.

22. Mr ELAMIN (Sudan), speaking for the Arab Group, said that the Group deeply regretted the outcome of the vote, which was evidence of some countries' double standards in respect of non-proliferation efforts in the Middle East and would undermine efforts to create an NWFZ there. The insistence by some Member States, including certain nuclear-weapon States, that Israel need not comply with international resolutions such as General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 showed that they did not apply the same criteria to all States and were not serious about achieving universal application of the NPT.

23. Unprecedented pressure had been placed on Member States to vote in a way which would allow Israel to pursue its policies, which served only to exacerbate tensions in the Middle East. The Arab

States would pursue, by all legal means, their aim of ensuring that all Israeli nuclear facilities were subjected to the Agency's safeguards system and would resist attempts to allow Israel to ignore decisions of the international community as expressed in resolutions of the General Conference and the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

24. The Arab Group was grateful to those countries which had supported the draft resolution; their noble stance would not be forgotten.

25. Mr QUEISI (Jordan) said that, if universal adherence to the NPT and the creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East were to be achieved, underlying problems would need to be discussed thoroughly and objectively in the General Conference, followed by the adoption of detailed and equitable resolutions. All States in the region, except Israel, had acceded to the NPT and subjected their nuclear facilities to the Agency's safeguards regime. Israel had refused to do so, despite the many resolutions adopted by the international community since as far back as 1981. That was the underlying problem.

26. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the debate on Israeli nuclear capabilities at the General Conference's current session and the resolution on that subject adopted at the previous session (GC(53)/RES/17) had shown the concern felt by many Member States about the nuclear activities conducted by Israel with the support of certain other States and not subject to international controls. Israel's supporters had shown their double standards by advocating universal adherence to the NPT but not supporting draft resolutions in which all States in the Middle East were called upon to accede to the NPT.

27. The States which had opposed the draft resolution had prevented the Arab Group from expressing its concern about the Israeli nuclear arsenal, which posed a threat to peace and security in the Middle East. Israel continued to ignore numerous resolutions adopted in international forums, flout international law and occupy Arab territory. Had no international organization the power to curb Israel's defiance of international law? The international community, and particularly the NPT Depositary States, should act to ensure that Israel complied with the resolutions adopted in international forums by acceding to the NPT and opening up its nuclear facilities for Agency inspection.

28. The Arab States wished the item on "Israeli nuclear capabilities" to be maintained on the agendas of the Board of Governors and the General Conference.

29. Mr OULD ZAHAVE (Mauritania), having thanked all the delegations which had voted in favour of the draft resolution, said that it had not been intended to be divisive, but to bring about Israel's accession to the NPT. Until Israel acceded to that treaty, peace in the Middle East would be under threat and all efforts of the Agency to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy would be in vain.

30. Mr EL-KHOURY (Lebanon) said that the resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities adopted the previous year (GC(53)/RES/17) had been discussed twice by the Board of Governors and had been the subject of a report by the Director General, but unfortunately no progress had been made in its implementation. Israel had not acceded to the NPT or subjected all its nuclear facilities to the Agency's safeguards system, nor had it agreed to implement the resolution.

31. Some Member States had used the lack of progress in the implementation of the resolution as an excuse for trying to have the item on Israeli nuclear capabilities excluded from the agendas of the Board of Governors and General Conference. Those Member States should acknowledge that their persistence in condoning Israel's defiance of international law had contributed to the lack of progress in the implementation of the resolution. As long as they unyieldingly opposed any discussion of the Israeli nuclear programme within the Agency, there was little prospect of an NWFZ being established

in the Middle East. Over the years, tolerance had been transformed into a policy of shielding Israel's nuclear capabilities from international scrutiny and preserving the opacity which characterized all its nuclear activities.

32. The draft resolution had not been intended to divert the attention of the Agency's Policy-Making Organs from other important issues. Any group of countries had the right to raise its legitimate concerns without being subjected to intimidation. The draft resolution was long overdue, and rejecting it because of a potential threat to the — as yet hypothetical — 2012 conference had been naive. Acceptance by Israel of the provisions of the draft resolution would have been the best way to build confidence and pave the way for a successful conference in 2012.

33. The General Conference was an appropriate forum in which to raise the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities. For some years it had adopted an annual resolution on "Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat" until 1992. The decision to stop adopting such resolutions had not improved the situation. The draft resolution which had just been rejected did not single out Israel; that country had singled itself out by deliberately choosing to remain outside the NPT, thus arousing the fears of its neighbours about its nuclear capabilities. The argument that peace was a prerequisite for nuclear disarmament had been disproved by the accession of all the Arab States to the NPT and the conclusion by many of them of an additional protocol.

34. Finally, he wondered whether the General Conference's resolutions had an expiry date. What was the benefit to the Agency of adopting an almost identical resolution every year when the Agency should be focusing its efforts on implementing the resolutions which already existed? What was the legal basis for such a practice?

35. Pending any answer to those questions, his delegation was grateful to all other delegations that had supported the draft resolution, which dealt with a highly controversial issue that was exacerbating the already inflammable situation in the Middle East.

36. Mr. TAJOURI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), expressing disappointment at the outcome of the vote on the draft resolution, said that a group of countries that bore a major responsibility for implementation of the NPT had turned a blind eye to certain issues relating to Israel while vigorously pursuing those issues when they related to other countries. The 2010 NPT Review Conference had called upon Israel to accede to the NPT and conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency. The rejection of the draft resolution contained in document GC(54)/L.2 sent a message to Israel that it need not submit to the will of the international community. Israel had not attended the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and it would probably not attend the 2012 conference either. The Arab States had proposed the draft resolution because they had deemed it to be of paramount importance for the achievement of universal adherence to the NPT.

**The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.**