



Statement

by

**H.E. Dr. Nawaf Salam
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to the United Nations**

**at the
General debate**

**of the
First Committee**

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Check Against Delivery

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of my delegation's full support and engagement throughout this session.

Mr. Chairman,

For the first time in decades, there is a renewed universal consensus on the danger of nuclear weapons and the threat of using them. Regretfully, we are no yet in agreement on the way to prevent such danger and to permanently eliminate its eventual devastating consequences.

Last July 7th, Lebanon among 122 states voted in favor of adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a historic agreement to outlaw these ugly weapons of mass destruction and establish a pathway for their total elimination.

Lebanon welcomes the adoption of this Treaty, which builds upon and further develops norms already established through the Non Proliferation Treaty and other conventions dealing with weapons of mass destruction.

Indeed, despite the failure of the Review Conference in 2015, Lebanon still believes in the relevance of the NPT as the cornerstone for nuclear disarmament and particularly with regard to the implementation without further delay of the 1995 Resolution on the establishment of a Middle East Free Zone of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In this regard, Lebanon reminds that in the Middle East, Israel is the only non party to the Treaty, and that it continues to threaten peace and security in the region by continuing to amass nuclear weapons, let alone refusing to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

Mr. Chairman,

I am still haunted by my visit to Hiroshima in 2015. An experience impossible to forget, as I could personally witness the disturbing effects and continuous humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons, and I strongly believe it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to thrive to save humanity from the recurrence of such fatal tragedies.

Lebanon supports all relevant initiatives on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and advocates for quality education in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Lebanon welcomes the increased awareness, through this Committee, of the harm caused to civilians by explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as the increased awareness of the environmental dimension of armed conflicts.

Lebanon reiterates its engagement to the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and, based on its painful experience as a victim of these weapons since 2006, Lebanon calls again for the universalization of the Convention.

Lebanon reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and looks forward to the Review Conference next June, as an opportunity, among others, to continue building on the achievements of the sixth biennial meeting of states (BMS6) mainly on the links with the Sustainable Development Goals, and with gender issues.

In this context, Lebanon welcomes the gender perspective included in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as well as previously in the Arms Trade Treaty and reaffirms the necessity to continue mainstreaming gender perspectives in all disarmament issues.

Moreover, Lebanon reaffirms the necessity to continue working towards the universal, strong, and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

There is an obvious and urgent need to consider in this First Committee cyber security issues. The internet is now essentially a civilian infrastructure, and as such, it should not be made the target or the medium for attacks. The existing international

law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law (IHL), provide solid guidelines, yet insufficient for the way forward.

There is also a need to determine the linkages with issues such as nuclear safety, autonomous lethal weapons and the networked systems through which drones operate.

In this context it is as well important to duly consider the ethical, legal, and humanitarian concerns raised by drones.

Furthermore, 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty and Lebanon hopes it will be an opportunity to move forward in preventing the weaponisation of outer space, and preserving it as a peaceful global domain to the benefit of present and future generations.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, global military spending remained in increase reaching an alarming 1686 trillion dollars globally in 2016. Lebanon reaffirms the necessity to redirect spending to development activities in accordance with article 26 of the Charter and to promote and enhance disarmament education, through “quality education for peace” such as advocated for in Security Council resolution 2250 on “Youth, Peace and Security”.

Finally, Lebanon reaffirms that it is first and mostly through the prevalence of justice, democracy, human rights and the rule of law that peace and security shall be sustainable.

Thank you.