

**Statement by Amb. J. Enkhsaikhan of Mongolia on agenda item
“Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East”**

15 September 2011

Vienna

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to thank the Director-General for his leadership in promoting application of the Agency’s safeguards in the Middle East and for this report on the issue as per General Conference resolution GC(54)/RES/13 (2010). Application of the Agency’s safeguards is not a merely technical issue. Acceptance of full-scale Agency safeguards with an appropriate verification mechanism is an important confidence-building measure that would promote establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East.

Establishment of NWFZs is an effective regional measure of nuclear disarmament that complements the global approach. Such zones are established through negotiations among the states of the region concerned that address and satisfy specific concerns and needs of the states of that particular region and provide mutual assurances to the states of the region. Mindful that the Middle East is afflicted with conflicts, there is almost global unanimity regarding the importance of establishing a NWFZ in that region. This would promote greater confidence among the states of the region, substantially broaden nuclear-weapon-free area of the globe and delegitimize further nuclear weapons and their possession. It should be added that NWFZs go beyond non-proliferation and, based on mutual agreement, can lead to stricter physical protection of nuclear infrastructure and material covering both the front and back ends of the nuclear fuel cycle and to the establishment of an appropriate regional mechanism to address these and related issues.

In 2000 the General Conference of IAEA has requested the Director General “to make arrangements to convene a forum in which participants from the Middle East and other interested parties could learn from the experience of other regions, including in the area of confidence building relevant to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.”

My delegation finds the report comprehensive and factual. Bearing in mind that 2012 is expected to be an important year of convening an international conference aimed at eventual establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East, the Director General’s initiative to hold this year a forum “on experience of possible relevance to the creation of a NWFZ in the Middle East” is commendable. The decision is based on the replies to his letter sent out to the states of the region and to the proposed agenda attached thereto. The responses the Director General’s letter demonstrate that there are still long-standing and fundamental differences of view on the issue of application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the region and conditions for establishment of a NWFZ. The factors that derailed the ACRS process nearly a decade ago are still present. However, the over-all agreement to hold the forum is a positive and encouraging sign that provides an opportunity to move the issue forward, perhaps an inch at a time, in implementing the 2000 resolution of the Agency’s General Conference. My delegation expresses the hope that the carefully drafted agenda of the forum would provide enough flexibility to its

participants to make the forum a meaningful and practically useful event. Establishing a NWFZ in the Middle East will not be easy. Bearing in mind its alternative, it is worth working to create an appropriate political and technical conditions for such a challenging yet needed and achievable goal. It goes without saying that the forum, to be held in November, would not substitute the 2012 conference but could contribute to its preparations.

Mongolia is one of the strong proponents of establishing and strengthening of NWFZs. Located between two nuclear-weapon states, with the end of the East-West and Sino-Soviet cold wars and the change in the regional security landscape, in 1992 my country declared its territory a single-State NWFZ, implying that it would not host nuclear weapons or parts of such systems on its territory and that its territory will not be permitted to be used to harm interests of other states. Mongolia has since been working hard to institutionalize its non-traditional NWFZ status. Hence, it is well aware of not only of the strategic or political challenges that such a noble goal can encounter but also at times of artificially raised doubts and misgivings. Our experience shows that in the end political good will, greater understanding of each other's genuine security concerns and trust are essential for any progress. In the past two decades we have been "inching" towards institutionalizing Mongolia's non-traditional nuclear-weapon-free status. We are not yet there but with political good will and understanding of the neighboring and other nuclear-weapon states we hope to reach that goal.