

Statement by Amb. J. Enkhsaikhan, Resident Representative
and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status national coordinator

22 November

Vienna, Austria

Mr. Chairman,

It is an honor to speak representing Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and as its Coordinator.

Allow me to join the previous speakers in congratulating Director-General Yukiya Amano for convening this IAEA Forum after over a decade since the issue was endorsed by the Agency's General Conference.

I would also like to take this opportunity to you, Mr. Chairman, for taking all the necessary measures to make the Forum as practically useful as possible. My delegation pledges its full support for the chairperson's activities aimed at making this Forum as productive as possible.

My delegation has listened with great interest to the presentations at panels I and II and believes that these presentations as well as the discussion underway present a wealth of practical information that can be useful for charting a way to promoting the goal of establishing NWFZs not only in the Middle East but also in some other regions of the world.

I shall make two observations in connection with the issues discussed at this Forum: Mongolia's policy and its relevance for the Forum's agenda and experience and lessons learned. I shall end my intervention by pointing out to some questions that, in my view, need to be answered at this early stage of consideration of this issue.

One. Mongolia's policy and its relevance for the Forum's agenda

Mongolia promotes an active policy aimed at strengthening international peace and security through practical measures of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

During the cold war Mongolia sided with one nuclear-weapon state and hosted the latter's military bases, which, by implication, meant that it risked to be involuntarily involved in a possible conflict. Therefore, immediately after the cold war ended, in 1992 when the Soviet troops were being withdrawn, it declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone and has since been working to institutionalize that status.

The 1975 United Nations comprehensive study of the question of NWFZs in all its aspects defined the basic parameters of establishing NWFZs. The study also acknowledged that even "individual countries" can establish such zones. The new post-cold war geo-political realities and the 1975 UN study served as a basis for our decision to turn its territory into a NWFZ. Unlike regional zones that need first and foremost the agreement among the states of the region concerned about the parameters and content of the zone, Mongolia adopted a legislation

that nationally defined its nuclear-weapon-free status on a territory that is sparsely populated and is almost as large as Western Europe.

Mongolia's status is supported in general by the General Assembly since 1998. However political support is not enough. To be more credible, the status needs to be clearly defined and, like other zones, assurances provided by the five nuclear-weapon States (the P5), including its two immediate neighbors, that would duly reflect its unique geo-political location and status. This work is still in progress. Mongolia is working with the P5 to seek ways to formally institutionalize the status so that the P5 would recognize Mongolia's status and commit not to contribute to any act that would violate it. We are also working for an appropriate format of institutionalizing the status. The latest information relevant to Mongolia's status can be found in document NPT/CONF.2010/12. Therefore I shall not dwell on it.

Two. Experience and lessons learned.

Though we know well the extreme complexity of the situation in the Middle East, nevertheless I would venture to share our experience in promoting Mongolia's status that might be useful.

Political environment. There is no such thing as ideal political environment, especially in a conflict-ridden region. Our case reveals that the parties to such talks at times need to be creative and make use of the evolving environment. Political will needs to be created mindful of the alternative and its possible consequences. In our case, the preparations for the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference provided an opportunity to move beyond mere declaration of hope or intention.

Confidence and contribution by all. Confidence between the states of the region is a *sine qua non* for embarking on serious and meaningful negotiations. It will not come easily. When it comes to security, often talk is cheap. Bearing in mind the importance of establishing a NWFZ, every state, big and small, should try to make its contribution. Thus for example the states that still have not done so need to accept application of the Agency's safeguards in all their activities. This would create a positive atmosphere for making a next logical step – accepting and adhering to the international non-proliferation regime. Adherence to the NPT is a *sine qua non* for full confidence. Avoiding actions that could undermine confidence is another small, yet important, factor that would promote confidence. All these can contribute to forming a critical mass that could create or strengthen the needed political will. Where there is a will, there will always a way. The already established international principles and norms, the new grounds broken by other NPWFs, such as a strong regional mechanism or requirement of adherence to the Agency's safeguards agreement and the additional protocol, will come in handy when sufficient confidence is created and serious negotiations start.

Trust and understanding. Our almost two decades of dealing with the P5 has highlighted the importance of trust and understanding. With regard to the former, there was no doubt in our interest and sincerity in outlawing hosting of nuclear weapons of other states. The difficulty that Mongolia faced was more connected with the uneasiness of some nuclear-weapon states that acceptance of Mongolia's status might set a precedent for others. Although the P5 agreed in 2000

(even in a written form) that Mongolia had a “unique geographic status”, it is taking painstakingly long for them to act in conformity with that agreed and accepted reality.

Understanding the other party and persistence. Trying to understand the position of the other party/parties is a key to confidence and progress. Mongolia’s conviction in the righteousness of its case, its readiness to listen to and reason with the other side, and its persistence allowed it to gradually peel away the cold war era zero sum game mentality and inflated suspicion, and to demonstrate that establishing a large, sparsely populated area free of nuclear weapons adjacent to two nuclear-weapon states can be a win-win situation for all that could contribute to greater transparency, confidence and predictability. Sometimes looking not at what one is giving up but rather what one is gaining is an approach that can expand the horizon and allow looking at a larger picture thus providing the flexibility necessary for attaining the agreed objective.

Format and content. Since Mongolia is located between two nuclear-weapon states only, there is no reason or need to follow the accepted format of establishing regional NWFZs: an international treaty and a P5 protocol to it. Hence Mongolia is dealing directly with its nuclear-weapon neighbors and the P5 as a whole. We are now talking about a possible one document that would define Mongolia’s own commitments and reflect those of the P5. Though the format might be different, the content of the status would reflect the already emerging norms and standards of international law regarding NWFZs. In the case of the Middle East the format might consist of several documents and annexes to them.

Three. Questions that need to be answered at this early stage

Instead of conclusion, I would like to end my statement by posing some questions for consideration by the states of the Middle East region that could be useful in pondering the next possible practical steps:

- do they want to outlaw nuclear weapons only or all weapons of mass destruction ?
- what do they expect from this Forum and what do they think should be the follow-up, if any, after the Director General reports to the General Conference ?
- what role they see for the Agency and other NWFZs ?
- should there be any connection with the proposed 2012 conference on establishing a NWFZ in the Middle East ?