



**Informal Workshop on Good Practices and Lessons Learned of Existing  
Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones**

**Opening remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu  
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Your Excellency, Ambassador Bahous,

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues and friends,

As a renewed effort towards achieving the objective of establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the States of the region, supported by the wider international community, held a successful first session of the Conference last year. I would like to congratulate again Ambassador Bahous and all the participating States and the observer States for the successful outcome. This workshop aims to support States in their implementation of that successful outcome.

The effort to establish a Middle East zone clearly has a strong conceptual connection with progressive development of nuclear-weapon-free zones since the 1950s. These zones now cover around 56 percent of the Earth's surface and virtually all of the Southern hemisphere. Although nuclear-weapon-free zones should not be considered ends in themselves, each of those regional agreements have made an invaluable contribution not only to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, but also to regional and international security.

Even though the objectives of the current process on the Middle East are broader, the experience of other regions in overcoming their unique challenges and establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones can provide useful lessons. After all, each of these efforts by their very nature share certain common objectives and elements. And addressing the grave dangers posed by nuclear weapons remains a central focus in the context of the Middle East. Accordingly, the experiences of other regions can inform many of the collective decisions that the current process will have to contemplate in the future.

In the first instance, each zone has been tailored to the specific circumstances and characteristics of the region concerned. This has involved navigating not only the varied and dynamic political and security relations within a region but also cooperating with critical external stakeholders, first and foremost – the nuclear-weapon States. The provisions of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties have been shaped by the preexisting commitments of the regional States and the prevailing international norms and standards that have emerged over time. Their arrangements for institutionalization and cooperation have had to build upon the capacity of existing organizations or create new ones where they were lacking. They have

had to deal with how to reconcile their aspirations with other legal regimes, such as the law of the sea. And they have had to take into account the various relationships and commitments that regional States maintain with others, especially the nuclear-weapon States which will effectively serve as guarantors for these zones.

I am very happy to see representatives from institutions that support or have contributed to existing zones and States parties that play institutional roles. I am further encouraged by efforts they are undertaking to increase their cooperation. I look forward to your presentations and ensuing interactive discussions over the next three days.

I have no doubt that this process will benefit from and draw upon your valuable experience. I also hope this informal setting provides an opportunity for the States of the Middle East to engage earlier with some of the key substantive issues that still lie ahead. I encourage all participating States to make full use of the experience assembled in this workshop to engage actively, including by asking questions and expressing any views they have on these various topics.

Allow me to ensure you once again of my Office's and my personal support for your activities on this track.

I wish you a very productive discussion, and I am personally looking forward to the discussions.

Thank you very much.