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EXCERPT

Nuclear weapon free zones

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/FCM10/week1.html#NWFZ>

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During the opening week of general debate at First Committee, delegations gave considerable attention to the issue of nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs). The debate focused on the importance of already established NWFZs, the prospect of their spread to new regions, and their general contribution to the global nuclear disarmament regime.

Sergio Duarte, UN High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, welcomed the recent entry into force of the [Pelindaba Treaty](#) and the [Treaty of Semipalatinsk](#), which established NWFZs in Africa and Central Asia respectively. [The Rio Group](#), [Kuwait](#), and [Algeria](#) joined Mr. Duarte in acknowledging the importance of these treaties. The [Chilean delegation](#) and the [Non-Aligned Movement](#) cited the importance of the international community's recognition of Mongolia's status as a country free of nuclear weapons. [Mongolia](#) announced that it will be submitting once again a draft resolution to the First Committee entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", and asked for the continued support of all countries.

The statement given on behalf of the [Central Asian States](#) asserted that the Treaty of Semipalatinsk has resulted in improved intra-region cooperation and stability in the region. Speaking independently, [Turkmenistan's delegation](#) advocated for the creation of a mechanism to oversee the Treaty's full implementation. With regards to the Pelindaba Treaty, Burkina Faso's delegation cited the Treaty's entry into force as contributing to the recent positive momentum behind nuclear disarmament. Additionally, [the African Group](#) called upon the nuclear weapon states that have not yet done so to ratify all relevant annexes to the Treaty to ensure its effectiveness. [The Caribbean Community \(CARICOM\)](#) and [the Rio Group](#) both acknowledged the importance of the Treaty of Tlateloco, which established a NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean, to building intra-region confidence and trust.

During the first week of debate, the most-discussed issue relating to NWFZs was the possibility of creating such a zone in the Middle East. The decision made during the May 2010 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference for an international conference in 2012 to make progress on establishing a NWFZ in the Middle East has raised the profile of the proposed zone considerably. [Tanzania](#), [Ukraine](#), and [Viet Nam](#) were among a diverse group of delegations that

voiced their support for the conference. [China](#) called for all parties to participate “in a constructive matter so as to ensure that the conference achieves a substantive outcome.”

Within the region, however, considerably more blame was assigned to specific parties that have thus far prevented progress on this issue. [Iran](#), [Yemen](#), Lebanon, Qatar, Iraq, and Syria all pointed to Israel’s refusal to join the NPT as being the major impediment to the establishment of NWFZ in the Middle East. The concept of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons continues to be endorsed by Israel despite their acknowledgement of having “certain reservations regarding its language.” [Israel’s delegation](#) underscored the lack of trust in the region and, particularly, the nuclear programme of Iran and the rhetoric emanating from its leaders as the main factors preventing progress on this issue.

Outside of the Middle East, the [Ukrainian](#) and Bangladeshi delegations encouraged the establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia. [The Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#) expressed their hope that the nuclear weapon states (NWS) would accede to the relevant protocol attached to the Southeast Asia NWFZ Treaty to ensure its future viability. [Mexico](#) called upon the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) to abandon their nuclear programme in order to achieve a denuclearized Korean Peninsula.

Delegations also used their statements to acknowledge NWFZs as an indispensable part of the nuclear disarmament machinery. [CARICOM](#) cited the importance of establishing a NWFZ as an invaluable confidence-building measure. The Maldives highlighted the greater stability and prosperity that results from their establishment. [The Central Asian States](#) also noted the role NWFZs play in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons to terrorists or other non-state actors. Taking a broad view, [the New Agenda Coalition](#) asserted that “[t]he establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens nuclear non-proliferation and contributes towards the goal of nuclear disarmament.”