

# ***First Committee Monitor***

**Second Edition**

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<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/FCM10/week2.html#NWFZ>

## **EXCERPT**

### **Nuclear weapon free zones**

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In a manner consistent with the opening week of the First Committee, several delegations continued to express their support and commitment to nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs) through the conclusion of the general debate on 12 October and into the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, which commenced on 13 October.

During the second week, two draft resolutions pertaining to NWFZs were introduced. Egypt was the lead sponsor of draft resolution [A/C.1/65/L.1](#), "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East." Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan all sponsored [A/C.1/65/L.10](#), "Agreement on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia."

L.1 contains only technical updates from the [2009 version](#). The issue concerning a NWFZ in the Middle East was highlighted again this week, receiving support from the delegations of [Norway](#), Venezuela, [Laos](#), [Tunisia](#), [Moldova](#), [Nicaragua](#), Thailand, [Russia](#), [Egypt](#), Switzerland, [Algeria](#), Iran, and [South Africa](#). [The Rio Group](#) expressed frustration that progress has not been made on this issue in the 15 years since the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. [Oman's](#) representative drew attention to the need for "Israel to accede to the Treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to subject all its nuclear facilities to the Comprehensive Control System" for progress to be achieved. Referring to Israel, [the Palestinian delegation](#) stated that "turning a blind eye on a State that is stockpiling and developing nuclear weapons while refusing to submit to international inspection is gravely dangerous and alarming." But during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, [the United Kingdom](#) asserted the need for progress towards a comprehensive peace in the Middle East in order to garner the confidence and trust required for the establishment of a NWFZ in the region.

The last resolution on the Central Asian NWFZ treaty was introduced in 2008 under the title, "[Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in Central Asia](#)". The [updated version](#) welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on 21 March 2009; welcomes the 2010 NPT working papers on the Central Asian NWFZ and on the environmental consequences of uranium mining; and welcomes the first consultative meeting of states party to the Treaty that occurred in October 2009. As in the 2008 version of the resolution, the co-sponsors note their readiness to "continue consolidations with the nuclear-weapon States on a number of provisions of the Treaty."

The need for nuclear weapon states (NWS) to provide negative security assurances to signatories of NWFZ treaties was also a topic of considerable debate. Speaking extensively on this topic, [the Rio Group](#) called on all NWS that have not ratified relevant protocols attached to NWFZ treaties to do so rapidly. Furthermore, [the Rio Group](#) asserted the need for all NWS that have signed or ratified protocols with reservations or unilateral interpretations to either modify or withdraw their

reservations. The statement given by [the Southern Common Market \(MERCOSUR\) and Associated States](#) echoed the call of many states to the NWS to withdraw their reservations regarding NWFZ treaties and provide negative security assurances. Speaking in reference to the recently established Central Asian NWFZ, [Kazakhstan's ambassador](#) stated, "it is crucial that nuclear powers extend full negative guarantees for the zone to be viable." [The Philippines' delegation](#) expressed its hope that NWS would ratify and adhere to the protocols of the Bangkok Treaty, which establishes a NWFZ in Southeast Asia.

Numerous delegations underscored the contributions of NWFZs to nuclear disarmament and to express support for increasing the number of NWFZs worldwide. [The Lao People's Democratic Republic](#) asserted, "the creation of nuclear-weapon-[free-]zones has significantly contributed to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as enhancing regional and global peace and security." [New Zealand's ambassador](#) announced her support for the resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere to be submitted this year by the Brazilian delegation. [Mr. Geoffrey Shaw, representing the International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#), stated that the Agency "can assist in the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, when requested." Tanzania noted that the entry into force of the African NWFZ has contributed to the momentum behind achieving the broader goal of complete nuclear disarmament.

## **Negative security assurances**

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During the second week of the First Committee, several delegations re-stressed the importance of establishing negative security assurances (NSAs). Among others, the delegations of [Ecuador](#), [Nicaragua](#), [the Rio Group](#), [South Africa](#), Thailand, and Venezuela reiterated the importance of NSAs in nuclear disarmament. As stated in the previous week of debate, NSAs should be "universal, unconditional, and legally-binding." However, the question still remained, what is the most effective method to establish such NSAs?

Both the [Pakistani](#) and [Tanzanian](#) delegations agreed that the best forum to establish NSAs is the Conference on Disarmament (CD). [The Pakistani delegation](#) pointed out the benefits of the CD as a multilateral tool for states to negotiate vital nuclear issues, such as NSAs.

A draft resolution on NSAs was tabled by Benin, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, and Viet Nam. [A/C.1/65/L.5](#), "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons," notes "that in the Conference on Disarmament there is no objection, in principle, to the idea of an international convention to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." Despite disagreement about the CD's effectiveness, some delegations still envision the CD as a successful forum for negotiations. The resolution remains unchanged from last year, when it was adopted in the General Assembly as [resolution 64/27](#) with 118 [votes](#) in favour, none against, and 58 abstentions.

Delegations also debated the existing framework of NSAs. The South African delegation stated that NSAs should be pursued within the framework of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). [South African Ambassador Xolisa Mabongo](#) further explained that NSAs should be considered with reference to the 1996 International Court of Justice advisory opinion, which says that the threat or use of nuclear

weapons “would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.”