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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Eshagh Al Habib
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Republic of Iran to the United Nations

At the high-level plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly
to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests
New York, 26 August 2020

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to express our sincere gratitude to you for convening this meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the International Day against Nuclear Tests. Also, we appreciate Kazakhstan's initiative to promote this International Day. In fact, despite the difficult international situation that currently we face due to COVID-19, we must continue working together to enhance public awareness about the effects of nuclear weapons or explosion tests and the utmost necessity for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Observance of this day is indeed the commemoration of the victims of nuclear tests and an indication of the international community's will to protect the environment against the destructive effects of such tests. Regrettably, nuclear tests are carried out in countries not conducting them, jeopardizing the lives of citizens of those countries.

According to the official counts, since 16 July 1945, the USA with 1054 nuclear tests (involving at least 1149 devices) has conducted 36.3% of the whole nuclear tests in the world. It is the only country that possesses the biggest nuclear arsenal in the world and not only has no intention to stop nuclear tests but also continuously is modernizing and strengthening its arsenal. It has used nuclear weapons and continues to threaten other non-nuclear-weapon states with its nuclear arms. Furthermore, this Nuclear Weapon State has irresponsibly lowered the threshold of use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, its withdrawal from the INF has been tremendous damage to the international efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

At the regional level in the Middle East, the Israeli regime is threatening other regional countries with nuclear annihilation. We reiterate our call on the international community to utilize any opportunity like this commemoration day or the 10th Review Conference of the NPT to make Israel promptly accede to the NPT without any precondition and place all of its nuclear facilities under the IAEA full-scope safeguards.

The unconstructive role of these two actors toward WMDs has been hindering the regional states' efforts to establish a Middle East free zone of WMDs.

As a signatory to the CTBT, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers this treaty as a step towards nuclear disarmament and in this context believes that it cannot be a substitute to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Therefore, nuclear disarmament must remain at the top of the agenda of the international community, and any nuclear test by any means must be prohibited. They are against the letter and spirit of the CTBT and more importantly the explicit legal obligation and responsibility of the Nuclear-Weapon States according to Article VI of the NPT.