

**2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of  
Nuclear Weapons: New York, 27 April – 22 May 2015**

**General Debate**

**Statement by the United Kingdom**

Madam President,

I congratulate you on your appointment. My delegation will of course support your efforts to ensure a successful outcome to this Review Conference.

Madam President, the United Kingdom remains committed to the Non Proliferation Treaty. It has played an unparalleled role, keeping the world safe and curtailing the nuclear arms race. It is at the centre of international efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, to create a nuclear weapon free world, and to enable access to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We look to this Review Conference to build on the success of the 2010 Action Plan and strengthen the Treaty further. The United Kingdom has made progress since 2010, as set out in our revised National Report. We remain committed to the full implementation of the Action Plan, even if some actions will take longer to implement than others. We expect the RevCon to confirm its continuing salience.

Madam President, the United Kingdom remains firmly committed to step-by-step disarmament, and our obligations under Article Six. We announced in January that we have reduced the number of warheads on each of our deployed ballistic missile submarines from 48 to 40, and the number of operational missiles on each of those submarines to no more than eight.

This takes our total number of operationally available warheads to no more than 120. This will enable us to reduce our overall nuclear warhead stockpile to not more than 180 by the mid 2020s.

My Government acknowledges that, despite significant reductions in global warhead numbers after the Cold War, there is frustration at the perceived slow pace of global disarmament. In recent years, this has been most evident at a number of international conferences on the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons.

The UK attended the Vienna Conference because we recognise the importance that many attach to this initiative. Many attendees argued, with great force, that devastating humanitarian consequences could result from the use of nuclear weapons.

The United Kingdom agrees. But this concern is not new. It is enshrined in the NPT itself, and has framed, and continues to frame, our approach to non-proliferation and disarmament. Our deterrence doctrine – and the robust safety and security measures we have put in place – were developed in the full knowledge of those potential consequences.

Some would like to force the speed of disarmament without taking into account wider security considerations. This risks jeopardising the achievements of the NPT and undermining its future. Our unilateral reductions have not always encouraged other states possessing nuclear weapons to follow our example, nor influenced those seeking a nuclear weapons capability to abandon their attempts.

My Government will therefore retain a credible and effective minimum nuclear deterrent for as long as the global security situation makes that necessary.

But let me be clear: the UK is here to negotiate in good faith, and we will continue to strive to build the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons.

This is why we are making parallel progress on the building blocks for global nuclear disarmament.

We have continued, and will continue, our ground-breaking verification work with Norway and with the United States.

We have signed, and ratified, a Protocol to the Central Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty.

We hosted the sixth P5 Conference in London in February, taking further steps on transparency. Only by talking openly and frankly can we create the right conditions for more rapid nuclear disarmament. We will look to build on such initiatives.

Madam President, responding resolutely to proliferation is a key challenge for all States. It is central to the effective functioning of the NPT. We will continue to support the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the strengthening of measures to give us all confidence that states are in compliance with their NPT obligations.

On 2 April the United Kingdom, as a member of the E3+3, agreed with Iran the key parameters of a comprehensive deal on their nuclear programme. This was a major milestone towards reassuring the international community that Iran's programme is exclusively peaceful.

Important political and technical issues still need to be worked through, but we will aim to finalise all of the detail within these agreed parameters by the end of June.

We welcome Iran's adherence to its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Plan of Action and give our full support to the IAEA in verifying them. We continue to urge Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues, including in relation to possible military dimensions.

The United Kingdom deplores the DPRK's ongoing nuclear activities and its threats of a fourth nuclear test. We continue to be concerned about Syria's failure to remedy its non-compliance with the NPT.

The United Kingdom supports the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the goal of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

We deeply regret that a Conference on the establishment of such a zone has not yet taken place. We worked tirelessly with the Facilitator and other Co-convenors to encourage regional states to agree Conference arrangements, and welcome the significant efforts of all states that participated in a series of informal consultations. We hope that the remaining differences can be bridged soon.

Madam President, while we recognise the right of any State to withdraw from the NPT in line with Article Ten, we hope that this RevCon will agree a set of principles to prevent the abuse of this right.

We also reaffirm the inalienable right of all States Parties to access the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, provided that they are in compliance with their obligations. We stand ready to assist states in the development of safe and secure civil nuclear energy.

Madam President, reaching agreement at this RevCon will be challenging. But at a time of growing international uncertainty, we must remember that the NPT has stood us in good stead, and that it must continue to do so.

The United Kingdom will therefore play its part to reach an outcome that best benefits our collective rights to undiminished security, whilst taking us closer to our goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

**END**