



## **United Kingdom**

### **Statement at the UNDC 2016**

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Mr Chairman,

The UK champions consistently the United Nations' Disarmament Machinery framework as an essential part of the rules based international system. The United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary said in his statement to the UN General Assembly last year that "Britain has always believed that the stability we seek in relations between nations is best realised through the framework of laws, norms and institutions that together constitute the rules-based international system that was developed after the Second World War, with the UN Charter at its heart."

The Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee of the UN General Assembly are as relevant today as when they were created. They are mutually reinforcing. We believe a reinvigoration of any one of the bodies will have a positive effect on the others. This year the UK was pleased to have submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a proposal for a Programme of Work which remains under consideration.

Since we were last here in this room at UNDC we have seen an example of what can be achieved by working together through the rules based system underpinned by the non-proliferation norm. After more than a decade of tough negotiations, on 14 July we, alongside our E3+3 partners, agreed a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran that imposes strict limits and inspections on its nuclear programme. Our focus is now on the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

The United Kingdom has a strong record on nuclear disarmament and meeting our obligations as a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We remain determined to continue to work with partners across the international community to prevent proliferation, to build trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear

weapon states, and to take tangible steps toward a safer and more stable world, in which countries with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

We have steadily reduced the size of our own nuclear forces by well over 50% since our Cold War peak. Our 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review confirmed that we will retain no more than 120 operationally available warheads and, by the mid-2020s, we will reduce our overall nuclear weapon stockpile to no more than 180 warheads, meeting the commitments set out in the 2010 Review.

Disarmament verification is a key issue to be addressed if we are to obtain, and remain at, total global nuclear disarmament. This area of work is challenging and demanding but only through sustained multilateral efforts will the technical and procedural issues of disarmament verification be solved. We are therefore delighted to be a part of the International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, working with all the P5 and over 20 Non-Nuclear Weapon States. Along with this the UK is also continuing its bilateral programmes with the US and Norway.

It is important that Nuclear Weapon States and Non-Nuclear Weapon States work together so that in the future verification can take place safely and securely, and provide all States with high confidence in actions taken towards disarmament.

The UK also supports the goal of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to end nuclear weapon test explosions. We fully support efforts to develop the verification regime for the CTBT, including early completion and provisional operation of the international monitoring system. We have now reached the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature and we encourage any remaining States that are outside of the Treaty to sign up and make a commitment not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion. Entry into Force of the CTBT would be a tangible step towards a safer and more stable world, one in which the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons can become a reality.

The CTBT Organisation demonstrated its value earlier this year by detecting the nuclear test carried out by North Korea. The UK strongly condemns North Korea's nuclear test as a clear and deliberate violation of a number of UN Security Council Resolutions. North Korea's actions continue to present a threat to regional and international security. The UK strongly supports the adoption of UNSCR 2270 in response to these provocations, and supports and encourages the rigorous implementation of the new measures by the international community.

The UK supported the General Assembly resolution establishing a Group of Government Experts (GGE) on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) mandated to "make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or

other explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein". We continue to believe the outcome of the FMCT GGE will put the CD in a more informed position when negotiations begin.

### Conventional

Confidence Building Measures in the field of conventional arms is an important endeavour and one which the UK fully supports. This can be seen in our commitment to confidence building measures including annual reporting to the UN Arms Register on Conventional Arms, our transparency reports to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and associated Protocols, and our annual reports to the Anti-Personnel Landmines Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The universalisation of all these instruments would be a giant leap towards better transparency and confidence in the field of conventional arms and we call on those not yet States Parties or participating in such instruments to do so without delay.

The existing overarching framework of conventional arms control and CSBMs, e.g. CFE, Open Skies and the Vienna Document, contains many effective elements which we should look to preserve. However, it is also clear that the regimes are not functioning optimally and need updating to make them fit for purpose in the context of the evolving international security landscape. We will continue to support our partners in their efforts to review these initiatives.

2015 also saw some further confidence building measures being approved. The successful Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) First Conference of States Parties (CSP1) in Cancun, in August 2015 agreed some key decisions which provide a clear direction for the effective implementation of the ATT and its associated transparency.

The UK believes that the ATT provides an effective framework for confidence building in the field of conventional arms, but, like the other instruments just mentioned, underscore that its success depends on universalisation and robust implementation.

We believe that this Treaty has the potential to change the lives of those most affected by the unregulated and illicit trade in arms and the UK is very proud to have been one of the leading advocates of the ATT, from the very beginning. We look forward to furthering this important work as we move towards the Second Conference of States Parties (CSP2) later this year.

We will continue to provide assistance where possible to those looking to join and implement the Treaty. Last year, the UK provided £150,000 to developing States to sponsor their attendance at CSP1 and plans to use the remaining funds to do the same at CSP2. We have also funded projects focused on co-ordinating and mapping ATT assistance, technical implementation support, and strengthened

capacity amongst Commonwealth States to implement the ATT via a Wilton Park conference.

Mr Chairman,

The UK remains committed to combating the threats posed by small arms and light weapons (SALW) – the single most significant contributor to conflicts, violence and crime. We must turn these negative impacts into positive action towards building peaceful and stable societies. UK priorities include assisting with stockpile management, including surplus disposal via destruction, and ensuring better regulated exports. Our efforts are focused particularly in Libya and the Sahel, where illicit trade in SALW is fuelling instability and insecurity. We look forward to the sixth-biennial meeting of States of the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All Its Aspects to refocus international attention on these issues.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the UK remains resolute in its pledge to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by all explosive remnants of war (ERW) including cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines.

The UK is fully committed to achieving the goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, including their globalisation. The UK withdrew all cluster munitions from operational service in 2008 and completed the destruction of its stockpile of cluster munitions in December 2013, more than 5 years ahead of the schedule set by the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Phase 4 of Falkland Islands demining concluded in March 2016, taking the total number of cleared minefields to 35. The UK is considering further projects to clear the remaining minefields over the coming years.

In 2015 alone, UK mine action work in developing countries resulted in the removal of over 22,152 landmines and explosive remnants of war; released 37,003,469 square metres of land which resulted in people having better access to basic services, increased economic opportunities and improved safety. The UK's projects also reached 116,500 people through mine risk education activities. The UK also worked in Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq and the Ukraine to strengthen the ability of national authorities to manage their own landmine and explosive remnants of war programmes.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, the UK looks forward to successful discussions in the 2016 session of the UNDC.