L25: TOWARDS A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD: ACCELERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT COMMITMENTS

UK EXPLANATION OF VOTE: 26 OCTOBER 2010

Mr Chairman,

The United Kingdom abstained yesterday on L25. I wanted to provide some background to this decision, especially as my delegation has had a number of very positive consultations with the authors of the resolution in the course of First Committee. We hope that this positive engagement could continue.

At the NPT Review Conference in May, we agreed for the first time to Action Plans across all three pillars of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses. This was unprecedented, and many of the countries represented in the New Agenda Coalition were instrumental in achieving that outcome.

The United Kingdom regards that comprehensive set of action plans as the new agenda which should guide our work over the next few years. So we were pleased to hear the Statement by Ireland on behalf of the NAC in which they expressed commitment to the NPT in all its aspects. But in general we have been disappointed to see that a number of resolutions here at First Committee have focussed almost exclusively on the nuclear disarmament agenda. We would hope that all the countries who signed up to the NPT outcome would always consider the NPT action plans as a whole. If 2000 was the year of the 13 steps then 2010 was the year of the three pillars.

The resolution called on the Nuclear Weapon States to report back a certain level of progress by a specified date. This goes beyond the language agreed in the final document of the Review Conference itself.

We would also like to have seen in this resolution, and others in the Nuclear Cluster, a greater emphasis on the need for all states which possess nuclear weapons, not just the Nuclear Weapon States*, to undertake activities which are consistent with a shared objective of making the world safer and more secure. This comment in no way confers any particular status on such countries, but rather reflects the fact that all States should contribute to this shared objective.

*Nuclear-weapon State Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 1968.