NEW YORK, 17 OCTOBER 2011

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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to deliver remarks on behalf of the UK Delegation.

Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains a huge priority for the international community. Such weapons threaten our very existence. And this threat is heightened by the risk that non-state actors may acquire such weapons. We must work together closely to minimise the chance of this ever happening.

Mr Chairman,

Three international agreements are key in our efforts to reduce the threat from chemical and biological weapons. These are the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The United Kingdom welcomes the accession this year to the BTWC by the Republic of Mozambique, and calls upon all those States which have yet to accede to do so immediately. In addition, we call on those States which made reservations upon acceding to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to withdraw them without delay.

As a Depositary, the United Kingdom has been working closely with partners in preparation for the Seventh BTWC Review Conference in December 2011, when States Parties will have to take important decisions to strengthen the Convention and provide direction. We look forward to working together in Geneva to achieve consensus under the Chairmanship of Dutch Ambassador Paul van den Ijssel. In particular, we hope to reach agreement on a new substantive intersessional work programme; renewal of the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit and a dual track approach to Confidence Building Measures, which will contribute towards transparency and building confidence in compliance.

Mr Chairman,

The Chemical Weapons Convention was the first international treaty to ban verifiably an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Today there are 188 States Parties and we call on the few remaining who have yet to fully accede to the CWC to do so.

The Possessor States share the general recognition that they have an obligation to continue to destroy their remaining chemical weapons stockpiles until they have completed the task. We regret that both main possessor States will be unable to meet the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012, but we are reassured that they have both the intent and the will to complete destruction in the shortest time possible, and with full transparency of their efforts.

We also encourage the new Government in Libya to resume destruction of their remaining stockpiles as soon as possible. They should make every effort to meet the final deadline and in the meantime ensure the security of all their stockpiles, in line with their obligations under the Convention.

Furthermore, we encourage the Government of Iraq to continue to pursue its efforts to develop plans for destroying their own residual chemical weapons.
The UK also recognises the need for timely destruction of Japanese Abandoned Chemical Weapons in China. We welcome the progress now being made in implementing destruction, and encourage the States Parties concerned to agree and implement further concrete steps at the earliest practicable date.

We welcome the initiative of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in setting up the Advisory Panel on the future priorities of the OPCW. We look forward to deliberations that bring the transition to reality. There is much work already underway on disarmament, but non-proliferation is an on-going task which needs to keep up with scientific and technological developments. Ensuring a permanent end to the threat of chemical weapons will require a well targeted and effective verification regime, and inspectors with the necessary training and expertise.

Given the UK’s commitment to the non proliferation challenges of chemical and biological weapons we are delighted the Secretary General has announced the appointment of Finland to host and facilitate a conference in 2012 that will consider the creation of a Middle East zone free of all Weapons of Mass Destruction and their means of delivery.

Mr Chairman,

The UK continues to fully support the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, one of the most important Counter Proliferation and Counter Terrorism security instruments. UNSCR1977 underlined the importance of this resolution to prevent the proliferation to non-state actors of chemical, biological, and nuclear materials, weapons, and their means of delivery. We call on all States to comply with and fully implement the obligations of this resolution.

The UK provides assistance relevant to the implementation on resolution 1540 to states that request it through a range of international initiatives and in coordination with other partners. The UK fully supports the extension of the G8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and the focus areas agreed at the Deauville Summit in 2011. We welcome the contribution by all Global Partnership members and encourage all states to engage with the initiative. The UK continues to support other international mechanisms designed to prevent the proliferation of WMD, such as the Nuclear Security Summit process and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and calls on all states to sign and ratify the relevant conventions, such as the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

The UK supports the work of the Missile Technology Control Regime and subscribes to the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. The risks caused by the proliferation of missiles that could be used to deliver weapons of mass destruction are significant. Tests of ballistic missiles of increasing range and sophistication have been conducted over recent years outside all existing transparency and pre-notification schemes, especially by the DPRK and Iran.

We fully support the Missile Technology Control Regime’s continued efforts to apply appropriate controls on transfers of missile equipment, material, and related technologies usable for systems capable of delivering WMD and encourage all
States to implement the control lists and Guidelines.

We support the clear multilateral and universal purpose of the Hague Code of Conduct as a confidence building measure and welcome the recent addition of Singapore as a Subscribing State to the Code.

Mr Chairman,

Building international consensus to tackle proliferation is critical for our security, but rules alone are not sufficient. Successful implementation of international law depends on the individual actions and cooperation between States – and it is these efforts to disrupt and prevent illicit transfers, combat proliferation finance and tighten export control procedures that will ultimately stop the illegal trafficking of dangerous materials.

Thank you.