Mr. Chairman, my delegation abstained on draft resolution L.50, “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.” As many of you are aware, last year the United States announced a number of important changes to U.S. anti-personnel landmine, APL, policy.

On June 27, 2014 the United States delegation at the Third Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention in Maputo, Mozambique, announced that the United States will not produce or otherwise acquire any anti-personnel munitions that are not compliant with the Ottawa Convention, including replacing such munitions as they expire in the coming years.

On September 23, 2014 the United States further announced that we are aligning our APL policy outside the Korean Peninsula with the key requirements of the Ottawa Convention. This means that the United States will: Not use APL outside the Korean Peninsula; Not assist, encourage, or induce anyone outside the Korean Peninsula to engage in activity prohibited by the Ottawa Convention; and Undertake to destroy APL stockpiles not required for the defense of the Republic of Korea.

These measures represent important further steps to advance the humanitarian aims of the Ottawa Convention and to bring U.S. practice in closer alignment with the international humanitarian movement embodied in the Ottawa Convention.

Even as we take the steps announced last year, the unique circumstances on the Korean Peninsula preclude us from changing our landmine policy there at this time. As such, we are not presently in a position to comply fully with and seek accession to the Ottawa Convention, and must continue to abstain on this resolution. However, we will continue our diligent efforts to pursue material and operational solutions that would be compliant with and ultimately allow us to accede to the Ottawa Convention while ensuring our ability to respond to contingencies on the Korean Peninsula and meet our alliance commitments to the Republic of Korea.

More broadly, the United States is the world’s single largest financial supporter of humanitarian mine action, providing more than $2.5 billion in aid in over 90
countries for conventional weapons destruction programs since 1993. The United States will continue to support this important work and remains committed to a continuing partnership with Ottawa States Parties and non-governmental organizations in addressing the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel landmines.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.