Mr Chairman,

My delegation fully supports the statement by the distinguished representative of the European External Action Service on behalf of the European Union.

**UK action**

Mr Chairman,

The UK has played, and will continue to play, an active role in helping to build an international environment in which no state feels the need to possess nuclear weapons.

But sadly we are not there yet. And while there continue to be significant risks of further proliferation, and while other states retain much larger nuclear weapons arsenals, the UK will retain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent as the ultimate guarantee of our security.

As a nuclear weapons state, the UK recognises its special responsibilities and has made a significant contribution to helping build the conditions that will allow for further nuclear disarmament, both through its own actions as a nuclear weapons state and in its active pursuit of progress at an international level.

The UK’s record on disarmament is a strong one. It is one on which we have built during this NPT review cycle through the measures that we announced in our October 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review.
In that document we announced reductions to the number of warheads and missiles onboard each of our nuclear deterrence submarines, to the total number of our operationally available warheads, and to our overall nuclear weapons stockpile. In June 2011, we announced that the programme for implementing these warhead reductions had commenced early, enabling us to reduce our overall nuclear warhead stockpile from not more than 225 to not more than 180 by the mid 2020s.

Numbers are, of course, a key issue, but, as the 2010 Action Plan recognises, so is the significance of nuclear weapons in defence policy. On this front, we have made clear that nuclear weapons play a very discrete and limited role within the UK’s defence policy. We have been clear that the UK would only consider using nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances of self-defence, including the defence of our NATO allies. We have been clear too that the UK will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against Non-Nuclear Weapons States Party to, and in compliance with their obligations under, the NPT.

The 2010 Action Plan rightly highlights the importance of transparency. The UK has, I believe, demonstrated a high level of transparency in making such announcements, a high level of transparency both about the capabilities that we possess and about the role that they play within UK defence doctrine.

The UK is transparent too about its disarmament activities. We regularly provide updates on these, for example through our statements at NPT PrepComs and in other fora, including the UN General Assembly’s First Committee and the UN Disarmament Commission, which concluded its latest meeting last week. The UK will, of course, report to the 2014 PrepCom in line with the reporting commitments we made in the 2010 NPT Action Plan. The P5 have also continued to advance our collective discussions on an approach to reporting on our relevant activities across all three pillars of the Action Plan and we will continue to focus on this issue under France’s leadership.
Mr Chairman,

Unilateral action alone will, of course, only get us so far. It is only through nuclear weapons states moving forward together, through balanced and reciprocal disarmament, through pursuit of a step-by-step and consensual approach, that we will achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

That is why, of course, the UK instigated the P5 Conference dialogue in 2009, bringing the NPT nuclear weapons states together to help build the mutual understanding and trust needed to take forward our shared NPT commitments. After successful follow-up Conferences in Paris in 2011 and in Washington in 2012 we have just held the fourth Conference, hosted by Russia, at the end of last week. We look forward to the fifth P5 Conference that will be held in 2014.

That conference allowed the P5 to take stock of the progress being made in pursuit of the 2010 Action Plan commitments, and to focus in on those areas where we can continue to make further gains as we head into the second half of the NPT review cycle. I will not repeat the substance of the P5 statement from last week, but I think the statement reflects how we are making good progress in fostering a broader, deeper dialogue across the three pillars of the action plan, and in maintaining a necessary focus on delivering on the commitments of 2010.

We must also seek to build confidence and understanding between nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapon states if we are to find a realistic route towards global disarmament.

Our ground-breaking work with Norway on the verification of warhead dismantlement has been the first time that a nuclear weapons state has engaged in such an open way with a non-nuclear weapons state on such a sensitive issue. Both we and Norway have
learnt a huge amount through this initiative about how nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states can work together effectively in pursuit of our shared goal. We have shared this learning with our P5 partners, including at a meeting in London last April at which we briefed P5 partners on the initiative, and we have shared some of our learning with colleagues here, for example at last year’s PrepCom. We will continue to share developments as we move forward, with the P5 and with all states, including at the UKNI event at this year’s PrepCom on Thursday at 13:15 in room XI.

Building on this first, we are also working with Brazil to develop a disarmament-focused dialogue this year that we hope will focus on how nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states can work together most effectively to find a way forward on building the conditions for further action on disarmament.

**International architecture**

Improving trust and understanding to find a way forward is key, but so is putting in place the international architecture needed to make it as difficult as possible to develop and produce nuclear weapons.

On this, the UK is making a strong contribution. We have signed and ratified the CTBT – indeed we were, along with France, the first to do so. We are vocal campaigners for its entry into force, and will continue to take every opportunity to urge all those who have not yet signed and ratified it to do so. We welcome and congratulate Brunei Darussalam and Chad on their recent ratifications of the Treaty.

The UK strongly supports the work of the CTBT Organisation in building up the treaty’s global verification regime. We have provided expert advice in seismology, radiochemistry and on-site inspection to help establish a viable and credible verification regime which is ready for entry into force. To this end, we hosted a P5 Technical Experts Meeting in Vienna last month that identified a number of areas for future P5 collaboration and decided to pursue inter-sessional work, in particular ahead of the important CTBT Integrated Field Exercise in 2014 in Jordan.
The UK actively supports the need to negotiate an international Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, which would put an end to the future production of the material needed to make nuclear weapons. In line with the 2010 Action Plan, we call for the immediate start of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament. We continue to be disappointed by the continuing block in the CD, and we continue to work with our P5 colleagues and other partners to explore potential ways in moving forward successfully. We hope that the new UN Group of Government Experts that will come together next year will help move discussions forward in a way that can help us achieve this goal.

**Conclusion**

Mr Chairman,

Pursuing a consensus-based step-by-step approach to multilateral disarmament - through building necessary mutual trust between states, and through putting into place the key international architecture to help build the conditions for further disarmament - offers the most realistic and effective route towards our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The UK is committed to pursuing progress through this process and will continue to work with all states to strengthen the NPT as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We must all work together to make progress in building the conditions for multilateral disarmament, to remove the incentives and opportunities for proliferation, and, in doing so, to move towards our goal of a world without nuclear weapons.