THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

CLUSTER 2 SPECIFIC ISSUE -
THE MIDDLE EAST

to the

THIRD PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE
2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE TREATY ON
THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS

By

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United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations in Geneva

New York, 1 May 2014

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
[Joint statement]

“Mr. Chairman,

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

We reaffirm our support for convening as soon as possible a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Toward this end, and in conformity with the NPT 2010 Action Plan, we continue to work closely with the Conference Facilitator, Under Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava, and with the states of the region to convene a Conference in Helsinki on the establishment of such a zone, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the states of the region.

We commend the tireless and creative efforts of the Facilitator and of the government of Finland to facilitate constructive dialogue among all the states of the region on acceptable arrangements for the conference, and for Finland’s ongoing commitment to host such a Conference.

We note that states of the region have participated in three rounds of meetings convened by the Facilitator and Co-conveners to move toward consensus on an agenda, modalities, and rules of procedure for the Helsinki Conference. Recognising that all parties share responsibility for making progress, we welcome the willingness of the states of the region to engage in a frank and respectful exchange of views on Conference issues. We believe these discussions are a positive development, as they have been constructive and substantive, and should continue.

To that end, we look forward to holding the next meeting in May. We call on the participation and input of all regional parties, in order that they can reach agreement on an agenda, the modalities, and a date for the Conference.”

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Statement by the United Kingdom

Mr. Chairman,

1. Speaking in a national capacity on behalf of the UK, I would like to make the following additional remarks.

2. The UK remains committed to the goal of establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and we recognise that its achievement will contribute significantly to regional and global security. We recognise the importance of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, as well as the NPT 2010 Review Conference Final Document and Action Plan and its call for a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We also note in this context that one of the states of the region is not a state party to the NPT and is therefore not bound by the 2010 Action Plan, but that their inclusion in a Conference is key to its success.

3. The UK acknowledges and shares the frustration that this Conference was postponed in 2012 and has not yet taken place. The past year has however seen significant steps towards the holding of a conference in Helsinki and my Government has been encouraged by the progress made. We welcome the positive and constructive engagement and wide attendance from states of the region at a series of informal consultations in Switzerland. We also acknowledge the flexibility that states have demonstrated by putting their trust in an informal set of talks, and believe that all states involved are engaging in good faith.

4. It is important to remember that the informal discussions that have taken place in the past six months represent the first regional dialogue on security issues in almost twenty years. This should not be understated. We recognise that considerable effort and compromise has been shown by and will be required from all participants, if we are to agree arrangements for a successful Conference that permits the inclusion of all the states of the region.
5. The UK therefore hopes that states of the region will attend the next round of consultations proposed by the Facilitator in May, and that they will continue to participate constructively, in order to reach consensus on the outstanding issues and allow the early scheduling of the Conference. All states parties to the NPT should consider how they can best support and encourage those consultations.

6. The UK would like to restate its support for the work of the Facilitator, Jaakko Laajava. The Facilitator has worked determinedly, visiting and engaging with countries across the region on over 200 visits, as well as leading the consultations in Glion. In line with the seriousness with which we take our responsibility as one of the co-convenors of the Conference, the UK continues to provide full political support and financial assistance to the Facilitator.

7. In conclusion, we will continue to support fully the Facilitator’s ongoing consultations and preparations for a successful Conference. We are hopeful that the next round of talks will prove constructive and allow us to reach agreement on the outstanding issues. The UK is optimistic that, with the right approach and attitude, this will allow the scheduling of the Conference as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.