

Madame Chair, I take the floor to explain Canada's vote on resolution L.2.

Madame Chair, delegations will recall that Canada took the floor after the vote on last year's version of this resolution to register our concern at the lack of balance evidenced by the absence in the resolution of any reference to other nuclear proliferation risks in the Middle East region.

To the degree which this resolution is intended to recognize that the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East would pose a serious threat to international peace and security, we regretted that no reference was made to the findings of the International Atomic Energy Agency regarding Iran's non-compliance with its safeguards obligations pursuant to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Madame Chair, since that time, the issue of Iran's nuclear activities remains unresolved.

We are particularly cognizant of UN Security Council resolution S/RES/1696 and Presidential Statement S/PRST/2006/15 both of which have called upon Iran to return to compliance with its obligations. Nevertheless, Iran has chosen to ignore these Security Council actions and the efforts of the international community to arrive at an equitable and lasting solution which would meet the concerns of the international community with regard to Iran's intentions.

Further, Iran has repeatedly threatened its neighbour, Israel - and the people of Israel - with annihilation. Iran's rhetoric, combined with Iran's refusal to respect the decisions of the international community represented in the statements and resolutions of the Security Council, cause us grave and serious concern.

If the goal of this resolution is the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, as its title would seem to indicate, then the content of the resolution should in our view address the obligations of all states in the region to clear and unequivocal adherence to the NPT and full compliance with its obligations.

In this regard, we would recall the language of UNSCR 1696 which notes "with serious concern that the IAEA Director General's report of 27 February lists a number of outstanding issues and concerns on Iran's nuclear programme, including topics which could have a military nuclear dimensions, and that the IAEA is unable to conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran."

Madame Chair, the Government of Canada has deep and serious concerns about the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Those who have adhered to the NPT should respect meticulously and rigorously the obligations and undertakings that they have assumed as a State Party to that treaty.

Madame Chair, we continue to have reservations about the incomplete scope and unbalanced nature of this resolution. We hope that by the time we join together for the

next General Assembly we will have a resolution which more fully reflects the situation in this region. If the resolution remains the same, we will again reconsider our position. For the reasons I have expressed in this statement, we will abstain on this resolution.