

L.5 Decreasing Operational Readiness

Mr. Chairman,

I (also) take the floor today to explain Canada's abstention on L.5.

Canada's NACD policy balances our disarmament objectives with our security obligations. While we encourage concrete measures to reduce further the operational status of nuclear weapons systems, these steps must be taken in a way that promotes international stability, and be based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

In terms of this resolution, Canada is pleased that there is explicit reference to the significant steps already taken by a number of NWS to reduce alert times and de-target their weapons. Both the measures taken by these NWS to reduce the operational status of their weapons – as well as the recognition by the international community of these significant steps – are important.

However, at the same time there must also be recognition that - for the time being - deterrence remains an important element of international security, and a fundamental component of the defence strategy of NATO, of which Canada is a member.

Reducing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems remains important to Canada. Our co-sponsorship of the Japanese resolution L.58, which specifically calls upon nuclear-weapons states to reduce further the operational status of nuclear weapons systems "in ways that promote international stability and security", confirms this position. Unfortunately, as currently drafted, L.5 does not contain such language and we would hope the co-sponsors would address this next year.

Despite our abstention today, Canada welcomes the level of debate generated by this resolution, not only among delegations but with civil society. We hope active discussion on this issue will continue.

Thank you.