

27 October 2009

UK Explanation of Vote

L.23. treaty on South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (Bangkok)

The United Kingdom has just voted in favour of this resolution. I wish to clarify the reasons why the UK supported this resolution while making clear that our outstanding concerns about the Treaty on the South East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone remain.

In the UK's nuclear cluster statement, we expressed our conviction that if we are to make the world a safer and more secure place, then we need to focus on what binds us together rather than what divides us. We welcome L23's support for the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free-zones and its encouragement for the five Nuclear Weapon States **and** the States parties to this Treaty to resume their consultations on outstanding issues on the Treaty.

The UK would like to emphasise the importance we attach to the development of internationally recognised nuclear-weapon-free-zones, which can make an important contribution to regional and global security, provided they are established as set out in the 1999 United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) guidelines, i.e they are supported by all States of the region concerned, and by Nuclear Weapons States, are the subject of appropriate treaties, including comprehensive safeguards provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and were satisfactorily concluded in consultation with the Nuclear Weapon States.

It is therefore our longstanding policy to support the principle of a South East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and we regret that ASEAN States Party did not conduct consultations in accordance with the UNDC 1999 Guidelines before signing this Treaty. In this regard the United Kingdom wishes to recall that we are still awaiting a formal response to the non-paper issued by France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States to the ASEAN states on 4 September 2002. We continue to stand ready to resume consultations with the concerned States parties to Nuclear Weapons Free Zones Treaties to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome regarding the outstanding issues.

The United Kingdom looks forward to the early resumption of a constructive dialogue with the States Party to the Treaty and is encouraged by our discussions on this resolution during this First Committee.

Thank you Mr Chairman.