

REMARKS BY THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION AT THE CANADIAN NETWORK TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS EVENT, 11 APRIL 2011

- The UK government remains committed to the long-term objective of a world without nuclear weapons.
- The nuclear non-proliferation treaty is the cornerstone of the international security architecture. Its twin goals are to control the spread of nuclear weapons, and to continue on the long-term path to a world without nuclear weapons. To protect global security and achieve these goals, the three pillars of the treaty – non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – need to make progress in parallel.
- We believe we have a strong record on fulfilling our disarmament commitments and meeting our international and legal obligations under the NPT. The UK is committed to maintaining only a minimum nuclear deterrent; we have signed and ratified the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty; and we have ceased production of fissile material for military purposes.
- The successful conclusion of the 2010 NPT RevCon, together with the welcome ratification of the New START treaty by the US and Russia, has given a critical boost for disarmament efforts. We want to build upon the momentum that these developments have generated in order to make further progress.
- As a depositary of the NPT and a co-sponsor of the resolution, the UK is committed to working on the Middle East WMD Free Zone conference. We are working closely with the US and Russia to take this forward.
- The UK Government's Strategic Defence & Security Review (SDSR) of October 2010 reaffirmed our commitment to maintaining a minimum effective nuclear deterrent, but also contained a number of new disarmament measures. We announced that the UK will: reduce the number of warheads onboard each of our submarines from 48 to 40; reduce our requirement for operationally available warheads from fewer than 160 to no more than 120; reduce the number of operational missiles on the Vanguard class submarines to no more than 8; and reduce our

overall nuclear weapon stockpile to not more than 180 by the mid 2020s.

- We also announced a new, stronger security assurance that the UK will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states party to the NPT.
- The announcements in the October 2010 SDSR complemented other commitments the UK has made on disarmament. In September 2009 we hosted a P5 conference on confidence building measures towards nuclear disarmament and look forward to further engaging with the P5 this summer in Paris to make progress against our commitments in the NPT Action Plan.
- We are continuing research with a non-nuclear weapon state, Norway, into the verification challenges of nuclear disarmament, taking forward our long-running collaboration. My Norwegian colleague, Jo Sletback, will cover this in more detail in tomorrow's session. We firmly believe that increasing transparency, and developing the technical, military and political solutions to the practical challenges of disarmament are vital to making tangible progress towards our ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons.
- We are disappointed, however, that, despite the momentum that has been generated by these positive developments, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva remains deadlocked.
- The spread of nuclear weapons poses a threat to the security of all states. Conversely, effective non-proliferation is a critical enabler for nuclear disarmament: efforts to abolish nuclear weapons cannot succeed if we cannot stop them from spreading. It is therefore essential that all Parties fully comply with the Treaty's provisions. Otherwise, the confidence necessary for Parties to take measures to strengthen the NPT will further be eroded, with dire consequences for the maintenance of international peace and security.
- The UK continues to believe that the proliferation of weapons and materials of mass destruction to non-state actors remains a serious threat. International non-proliferation regimes and initiatives have an important role in combating this threat. The UK is active in a number of non-proliferation initiatives, including

the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the G8 Global Partnership, and the Nuclear Security Summit process.

- Universal adherence to the NPT's Additional Protocol is fundamental to the non-proliferation regime, because it provides the necessary minimum assurances that nuclear technologies are being used peacefully. If we are to build on the successes of May 2010 we also need to work together on strengthening the Treaty, including non-compliance, and ensure any benefits accrued as members are not kept if a country chooses, as is their sovereign right, to withdraw.
- Finally, we support efforts on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The UK fully supports ongoing negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and looks forward to further progress at the July PrepCom and at the conference next year.