UNUNITED KINGDOM

STATEMENT

By

Ambassador Jo Adamson

UK Ambassador
to the
Conference on Disarmament

Head of the United Kingdom Delegation

at the

First Committee

of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

NEW YORK, 7 OCTOBER 2011

Please check against delivery
Thank you Mr Chairman,

Mr Chairman,

The sixty-sixth session of UNGA First Committee will be an important one for the disarmament and international security agenda. Having everyone gathered here in New York affords us with an excellent opportunity to make progress across a range of issues. In the plenary sessions and thematic debates, we have the chance to take stock of developments over the last year across the spectrum: recognising the many successes as well as identifying areas where more work needs to be done. And in the margins, a number of meetings are taking place where we hope to take tangible steps forwards on a number of specific issues. 2012 is going to be an important year – not least with the NPT PrepCom, action on the Middle East Weapon Free Zone and the ATT Diplomatic Conference – and we need to work together over the coming weeks of First Committee to create the necessary momentum to make 2012 a success.

Mr. Chairman,

The UK plays a leading role across a range of disarmament and related international security issues that are the subject of our deliberations here in New York. Let me give you a few examples of the things we have been doing since we last met.

On nuclear disarmament, we have worked hard with a range of international partners to set the ball rolling on the implementation of the NPT Action Plan, following the successful Review Conference in 2010. Just a few months into the new five-year cycle we announced a number of significant disarmament measures in our Strategic Defence and Security Review. We then met in Paris in June with the other nuclear weapons states to discuss the recommendations in the Action Plan, and agreed a number of follow-up initiatives on nuclear terminology and disarmament verification. We have also continued to take forward our groundbreaking initiative with Norway on research into the verification of warhead dismantlement, and will host a workshop in London in December to share our experiences with other interested non-nuclear weapons states.

We’ve played a similar role at the forefront of efforts to make progress on some of the other issues to be addressed by the Committee. We remain fully committed as a Depository State to
the 2012 conference on the creation of a Middle East Zone free of all weapons of mass
destruction and their means of delivery, and we hope that all states in the region will fully
engage with the host and facilitator once announced.

We have continued to be a driving force behind efforts to secure agreement on a strong and
robust Arms Trade Treaty engaging fully in the substantive PrepComs and taking this matter
forward with all States to the Diplomatic Conference in 2012. We believe this is an
important instrument that all States should engage on.

We will also be taking an active part in the Seventh Biological and Toxins Weapons
Convention Review Conference in December where we hope to have a revitalised and
strengthened future process. We are also working diligently to promote the aims and goals of
the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In addition, and something which is rapidly becoming a priority on our agenda, is the issue of
cyber security. We are hosting an International Conference on Cyberspace that will take
place in London in November this year and hope that the results of these deliberations will
enhance the engagement of the international community on this important issue.

Furthermore, as the hosts of the 2012 Olympic Games, the UK has tabled the Olympic Truce
Resolution which encourages Member States to undertake actions at local, national, regional
and international levels to promote and strengthen a culture of peace based on the spirit of the
Olympic Truce. The UK will be working with partners internationally to identify
opportunities to promote the Olympic Truce ideals, prevent conflict and build peace and we
call on all UN member States to join with us and co-sponsor this resolution.

Mr Chairman,

In this productive vein, we are seeking to use this year’s First Committee to make further
progress. A number of important meetings are taking place this week which may define our
future endeavours. Discussions are ongoing on NPT issues and the South-East Asia Nuclear
Weapon Free Zone issues amongst key players. And we hope that the results of these will
further our collective goal of making the world a safer place.
We look forward to going into more detail in some of the thematic debates next week, but for now it remains for me to wish you well in your role as Chairman – and to reassure you that the UK will be doing everything possible to make this year’s sixty-sixth session a success.

Thank you.