Main Committee II
Statement by the United Kingdom

Mr Chairman,

1. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment. The United Kingdom looks forward to supporting your work over the next few weeks.

2. The United Kingdom would like to align itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of the European Union. I would also like to add some further remarks in a national capacity.

3. It is clear that the NPT is first and foremost a treaty designed to stem the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This is set out clearly in Articles I-III, and informs the undertakings in Articles IV-VII. In this, the Treaty has been very successful, reducing regional tensions associated with the threat of proliferation and contributing to a more stable, secure world for all.

4. Even so, some regions still live with the threat of nuclear proliferation. As states parties to the NPT, we must not lose sight of this, and must do what we can to further reduce the possibility of proliferation. The United Kingdom therefore remains committed to strengthening non-proliferation architecture, combating programmes of concern and building trust between neighbours – building on the non-proliferation actions agreed by states parties in the 2010 RevCon Action Plan.

5. Mr Chairman, the United Kingdom notes that there are now only a handful of states that have yet to commit to the aims of the NPT. We continue to urge all non-NPT states to sign and ratify the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states as soon as possible. In the meantime, we will work to bring those states closer to the international non-proliferation mainstream, and we urge all states parties to consider constructively how we can achieve this.

As delivered
6. In line with Articles I and II of the NPT, the United Kingdom remains vigilant to any attempts to proliferate nuclear weapons. We will continue to work with the international community to prevent this from happening.

7. The United Kingdom, as a member of the E3+3, agreed with Iran the key parameters of a comprehensive deal on their nuclear programme on 2 April. This was a major milestone towards reassuring the international community that Iran’s programme is exclusively peaceful. Important political and technical issues still need to be worked through. We will continue to work closely with our E3+3 partners and with Iran to aim to finalise all of the detail within these agreed parameters by the end of June. We welcome Iran’s adherence to its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Plan of Action, and give our full support to the IAEA in verifying them. We continue to urge Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues, including in relation to possible military dimensions.

8. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the DPRK’s continued development of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in direct violation of UNSCRs 1718, 1874, 2087 and 2094, as well as its recent threats to carry out a fourth nuclear test. We deplore all the DPRK’s ongoing nuclear activities and urge the DPRK to refrain from any actions that may lead to further violations of UNSCRs and further destabilise the region. We echo the call for the DPRK to fulfil its commitments under the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, and to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We hope to see progress during the next review cycle.

9. We deplore Syria’s ongoing non-compliance with its nuclear safeguards obligations. We strongly urge Syria to cooperate fully with the IAEA by immediately providing access to the information, documentation, sites, material and personnel in Syria that the IAEA has requested.
10. The United Kingdom is strongly committed to an effective and efficient safeguards regime, in line with Article III, and is fully supportive of the role of the IAEA in this regard. We believe that a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement plus an Additional Protocol should be the universal verification norm, and hope that this Review Conference will definitively accept this. We call on all States which have not yet done so to sign and bring into force an Additional Protocol as soon as possible. We also underscore our firm support for the continued evolution of the safeguards system, as exemplified by the development of the State Level Concept. We hope that the Review Conference will support the IAEA’s progressive implementation of state level safeguards approaches.

11. Mr Chairman, in line with Article VII, the United Kingdom supports the creation of nuclear weapon free zones, wherever states of that region are able to agree arrangements. In this regard, we recall and wholeheartedly support the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the goal of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, as well as the agreement of states parties in 2010 to a Conference on the establishment of such a zone. We deeply regret that the Conference has not yet taken place, despite a number of promising informal consultations between Israel and Arab States. We welcome the significant efforts of those states during those consultations. The United Kingdom worked tirelessly with the Facilitator and our fellow Co-convenors to encourage regional states to agree Conference arrangements, which we believe is an essential precursor to allow a Conference to be convened. We are disappointed that the remaining differences could not be bridged, but believe that, with political will on all sides, this can happen soon. We hope that states of the region can find common purpose to allow real progress to be made towards our collective goal. I would like to return to this issue later in my statement.

12. Effective nuclear security and denying terrorists and non-state actors access to nuclear material is an essential aspect of an effective non-proliferation system. The United Kingdom looks forward to supporting the 2016 Comprehensive Review of UN Security Council Resolution 1540. The United Kingdom continues to provide assistance to other states to support full implementation of the
Resolution. We believe that all Member States should actively consider what more they can do to implement it ahead of the Comprehensive Review. We encourage states that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, its 2005 Amendment and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism at the earliest opportunity.

13. The final Nuclear Security Summit next year presents an important opportunity to secure and build upon the progress that has been made to improve nuclear security around the world. The United Kingdom is actively supporting preparations for the Summit, and welcomes the recent publication of IAEA guidance on the security of nuclear information, as the culmination of a UK-led gift basket from previous Summits. We are also supporting wider efforts on nuclear security, including through the IAEA and our contributions to the Nuclear Security Fund, totalling over £12 million since 2010. We urge other states who are able to provide contributions to do so. We also continue to support the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

14. In October 2011 the UK welcomed an International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) Mission to the UK – the first Nuclear Weapon State to do so. The Mission concluded that the civil nuclear security in place was robust. We have also invited the IAEA to send a follow-up IPPAS Mission to the UK, which we hope to host in 2015-16.

15. The United Kingdom actively supports the efforts of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee in working towards minimising nuclear proliferation while ensuring that states are able to access nuclear technology for peaceful uses. During the last review cycle, the UK contributed extensive technical expertise to the NSG’s fundamental review of its Control Lists. We are continuing this work through the Technical Experts Group, ensuring that the NSG’s Control Lists reflect changing proliferation threats. We call on all states to adhere to the NSG’s Guidelines and to ensure that the Group’s Control Lists are taken into consideration when making decisions on nuclear and nuclear-related exports.
16. Mr Chairman, having heard the Facilitator's report at the start of today's debate, I would like to make some further remarks on the issue of the Middle East, given the UK’s role as a co-convenor.

17. The UK remains committed to the goal of establishing a Zone in the Middle East, free from Weapons of Mass Destruction and their delivery systems. We believe that such a Zone would contribute greatly to the peace and security of the region. As such, we reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of the Resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference which we co-sponsored along with the other depositary States of the Treaty. This was an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended. We see the practical steps endorsed by the 2010 Review Conference as a very significant development and in that regard, the UK remains committed to convening a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction attended by all States of the region. The UK has been working hard, alongside the Conference Facilitator, the other co-convenors, and all states of the region, to make progress towards that end.

18. The UK commends the tireless efforts of the Facilitator. The Facilitator's work has included visiting and engaging with countries across the region, meetings with relevant organisations, and leading our collective endeavours to agree the arrangements for a Conference.

19. The UK also takes its responsibility as one of the co-convenors of the Conference very seriously. UK ministers and senior officials have played an active role in outreach and engagement with the region. The UK has offered the Facilitator our full political and financial support, contributing over £200,000 to the Facilitator’s office in the past two years. The UK has also funded a series of projects, aimed at supporting the establishing of a Zone. These have included a series of civil society-organised events, aimed at building confidence between the key players, and a technical project that has considered the necessary properties and verification measures required for an eventual Zone in the Middle East.
20. The UK deeply regrets that the Helsinki Conference was postponed in 2012, and is disappointed that we have not yet been able to convene it. However, the UK believes that our collective efforts since 2010 have not been for nothing. As a result of the work of the Facilitator and the Co-convenors, and thanks to the considerable flexibility shown by regional states, Israel and the Arab States attended five separate informal meetings in Switzerland between October 2013 and June 2014. These were the first such regional security talks in almost twenty years. The UK believes that all of the states present participated in a positive and constructive manner. Papers on the agenda, modalities and outcomes for the Conference were tabled for discussion, and although disagreements remain, the UK believes that there was a broad acceptance of much of the agenda. There was also a recognised willingness of parties for all Conference decisions to be taken by consensus. We commend all of those states involved for their substantive contributions and their willingness to negotiate in good faith.

21. Regrettably, there have been no further informal meetings since the summer of 2014. However, the co-convenors continued to engage with all of the states of the region to encourage progress. The Facilitator continued to travel to regional cities, including Cairo, Tel Aviv and Tehran. We have also proposed alternative venues and meeting formats, with a view to encouraging all states to participate in a further round of consultations to try and narrow differences on arrangements. This is crucial, as only states of the region can agree the arrangements necessary to allow a Conference to be convened.

22. The UK appreciates that many will be frustrated that we have not yet convened a Conference. But we continue to believe that convening a successful, inclusive Conference attended by all States of the region will be a practical first step towards the long-held, common goal of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. The UK therefore urges all states of the region, supported by the Facilitator, the Co-convenors and indeed all NPT states parties, to undertake urgent consultations in order to allow the convening of a Conference as soon as possible, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by all of the states of the region. The UK is optimistic that, with the right
approach and attitude, we can deliver a Conference that sets us on the right path towards our common aim.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.