

Explanation of vote on behalf of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and France

L.41 "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations"

As NPT nuclear-weapon States, our three countries reaffirm the shared goal of and commitment to nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament, as referenced in the Preamble and provided for in Article VI of the NPT. In this regard, we remain steadfast in our commitment to seek a safer world for all and achieve a world without nuclear weapons. We continue to pursue a progressive step-by-step approach towards this end, in a way that promotes international peace and security, and strategic stability, based on the principle of increased and undiminished security for all. This proven approach to nuclear disarmament has produced concrete results, continues to enhance global security, and provides the only realistic path toward full implementation of NPT Article VI.

We believe that productive results on nuclear disarmament can only be achieved through a consensus-based approach that takes into account the wider global security context. Negotiating an international prohibition on nuclear weapons will not bring us closer to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Significant achievements have already been made in this regard. We emphasize the very substantial efforts made in achieving the cessation of the nuclear arms race as called for in Article VI of the NPT and affirm our intention never to engage in such an arms race. Global stocks of nuclear weapons are now at their lowest point in over half a century as the result of the concerted and sustained efforts on the part of nuclear weapon states. All States can help fulfil the goal of nuclear disarmament by creating the necessary security environment through resolving regional tensions, tackling proliferation challenges, promoting collective security, and making progress in all areas of arms control and disarmament. The NPT and the existing machinery set out in the Final Document of SSOD-1 have proven to be a solid framework to advance nuclear disarmament and provide all opportunities for launching a constructive and mutually respectful dialogue. In this regard, we reaffirm our support and readiness to explore all of the options to get the CD back to work, taking into account all previous proposals and agreements amongst themselves and bearing in mind the 2010 NPT Action Plan. To this end, we reaffirm the ongoing relevance of all provisions of the Action Plan adopted by consensus at the 2010 NPT Review Conference that remains an indispensable roadmap for the implementation of all the three pillars of the NPT.

Whilst we respect the views and legitimate concerns about the pace of nuclear disarmament progress of those countries supporting this resolution, we believe progress will only happen through a practical approach to disarmament. We do not accept the premise underlying the call to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to

prohibit nuclear weapons in this resolution. A prohibition on nuclear weapons will not in itself improve the international security environment or increase trust and transparency between nuclear weapon possessor states, nor will it address the considerable technical and procedural challenges involved in nuclear disarmament verification.

We are dismayed that the disarmament debate has turned in this direction and we remain open to other channels of discussion, but they must be genuinely inclusive and fully anchored in the global security context.

We are committed to a world without nuclear weapons but nuclear disarmament will only come about through steady effort to put in place the necessary conditions that do not now exist,.

This resolution contradicts the consensus-based approach that has served for decades to implement and strengthen the NPT regime in its three pillars, which is indispensable to the maintenance of international peace and security. It will set back the cause by deepening the divide among NPT states parties. It will also threaten the consensus-driven approaches in the NPT review process and divert attention from practical disarmament measures. For these reasons, our governments did not take part in the Open-ended Working group on nuclear disarmament (OEWG), whose recommendations, in particular on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, cannot constitute in any respect an acceptable basis for negotiations.

We urge all states to devote their energies toward strengthening efforts to enhance the three pillars of the NPT, support the IAEA safeguards system and existing disarmament machinery and to help develop both the political and technical tools and the conditions conducive to disarmament. Our countries have been supporting the entry into force of the CTBT and underlining the need to maintain momentum towards completion of all elements of the treaty verification regime. We are also supporting the start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty and the promotion of nuclear disarmament verification as essential steps needed as we move towards a world without nuclear weapons. In this regard, our countries will be supporting the resolutions L.28 on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, L.57 on Nuclear Disarmament, and L.65 on a FMCT.

Whilst reaffirming our commitment to continue our individual and collective efforts to advance nuclear disarmament, we will vote against the draft resolution L.41.