

## 2009 First Committee Conventional Weapons Statement

Mr. Chairman,

The United Kingdom fully subscribes to the statement made today on behalf of the European Union by my distinguished Swedish colleague.

The need to make progress along the road towards a World Free of Nuclear weapons has quite rightly dominated much of our discussion in recent weeks. The thematic debate on conventional weapons is a time to focus on the issue of conventional weapons, their proliferation and misuse, what a previous UN Secretary General termed the real world weapons of mass destruction; a challenge that affects thousands of people across the world every day.

Over the last year the United Kingdom has been working hard in the field of conventional weapons, both within and outside the United Nations.

In November last year, the United Kingdom was granted a 10 year extension to clear mined territory under its control in order to fulfill our obligations under the **Ottawa Convention**. We are thankful to States Parties to that Treaty and wish to reiterate our full support and commitment to the Mine Ban Treaty. At this time we have signed a contract with a demining company and expect the four-site clearance project on the Falkland Islands to begin in November.

On **Cluster Munitions**, we have signed and are now in the process of drawing up the necessary legislation to implement the prohibitions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions into UK law. Once this legislation is passed we will be able to ratify the Convention. We are working with others to ensure the broadest possible participation in this treaty which makes a real contribution to addressing the humanitarian threat posed by cluster munitions. We are hopeful that the Convention will soon enter into force and look forward to working with the Government of Lao in assisting with preparations to hold the first meeting of States Parties in 2010.

We have also remained supportive of the parallel track negotiation taking place in the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)**. Unfortunately, these negotiations seem to have made little substantive progress. This is regrettable. The United Kingdom believes that a new Protocol under the CCW could have supplemented the Cluster Munitions Convention and made some prohibition and restrictions on the use of clusters more universal. We hope that the Meeting of States Party in November will do all it can to address this issue and find a way through.

Mr. Chairman,

This year the United Kingdom was at the forefront of those trying to update and broaden the **UN Register on Conventional Arms** in particular to address the legitimate concerns of many nations that the register did not contain a category on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Despite

efforts by many in the expert group that met this year, and a last minute proposal that gained broad support, one expert felt unable to agree to the creation of a new category. In our view this was a missed opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the UN Register. We hope that in the coming years more States will use the register and that they will also press others to agree on the need to expand the current categories as well as raising the issue with the UN Secretary General in accordance with the current draft resolution we have before us at this year's First Committee.

Remaining with **Small Arms and Light Weapons** we look forward to working with colleagues and the Mexican chair in the run up to the Biennial Meeting of States Parties in 2010. There is still much work to do to ensure that the UN POA is implemented and has a real effect on the ground. We will ensure to help where possible including through formal and informal arrangements both in NY and Geneva.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2006 together with six other countries drawn from across the world we launched the process towards an **Arms Trade Treaty**. Since then we have had over 100 States views on an ATT submitted to the Secretary General, 3 meetings and consensus report from a Group of Governmental Experts and two of the scheduled six meetings of the Open Ended Working Group. Again this culminated in a consensus report recommending international action to address the problems associated with the unregulated and irresponsible trade in arms. Once

again we would like to express our thanks to Ambassador Moritan of Argentina for skillfully guiding us throughout this process.

This year we together with the 6 Co-Authors have submitted a new resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty, draft resolution no. L38. States are aware of the changes we are proposing to the process, the timeframe, and the rules that will govern the diplomatic conference. With these changes we are setting out will establish a new framework for the ATT, giving us direction and purpose to our overall goal. I will speak again on the issue of this year's resolution later in the debate

Thank you.