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Mr. Chair,

I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria and Switzerland, on the issue of decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems.

For several years now, our countries have called for practical steps to address the significant number of nuclear weapons that remain today at high levels of alert. We remain deeply concerned at the maintenance on high alert of weapons which have the destructive capacity of killing billions of people and pose a threat to the survival of humanity.

We find it anachronistic that while tensions that marked the international security climate during the Cold War have lowered significantly, corresponding decreases in the alert levels of the arsenals of the largest nuclear-weapon States have not been forthcoming. The fact that doctrinal aspects from that era – such as high levels of readiness – are perpetuated today is a deep and constant concern.

It is no mistake that lowering the operational readiness of nuclear-weapon systems has been recognised as being a key part of the nuclear disarmament process. It remains our strong view that action in this regard would result in a significant nuclear disarmament dividend through a reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in nuclear doctrines and therefore security policies overall.

We acknowledge and welcome the progress that has been made to date. The level of operational readiness of non-strategic nuclear weapons has been considerably lowered and decisions to stand down strategic bombers have also been taken.

These steps highlight the fact that de-alerting is possible and that technical and political challenges can be met. However, more can and more needs to be done to address the disproportionately high levels of alert of many nuclear weapons today.

We are encouraged by the numerous calls made by former high ranking officers from nuclear-weapon States supporting the necessity and feasibility of reducing the level of operational readiness of nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairman,

It is against this background that the group, on whose behalf I am taking the floor today, will table once again the resolution entitled *Decreasing the Operational Readiness of Nuclear Weapons*.

The main object of the resolution remains unchanged in calling for further practical steps to be taken to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems, with a view to ensuring that all nuclear weapons are removed from high alert status.

The resolution is closely tied to the Action Plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), particularly the commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to promptly engage with a view to, inter alia, considering the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems.

The resolution welcomes the opportunities provided by the NPT review process to address the further reduction of the operational status of nuclear weapons systems. It acknowledges the dialogue underway amongst the nuclear-weapon States on this and other issues related to nuclear disarmament and also looks forward to the report in 2014 by nuclear-weapon States on their work in this area.

Our countries have been pleased at the steady increase in support, from non-nuclear and nuclear-weapon States alike, that the resolution has garnered since it was first submitted in 2007. The strong support that the resolution attracts is a demonstration of our collective commitment to a diminishing role for nuclear weapons and our recognition that reducing alert levels is an important interim step towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. We look forward to continued strong backing for the resolution this year and invite all States to support it.

I thank you for your attention.