

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomes the opportunity to respond to General Assembly resolution 79/241 on a Comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects.

The United Kingdom was pleased to support resolution 79/241 and fully agrees with the sentiments set out at the start of this resolution: That the maintenance of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) and the establishment of new zones, including in the Middle East, promote global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute to the achievement of nuclear disarmament objectives.

The United Kingdom remains resolute in its support of such Zones, and has demonstrated that support by signing and ratifying all protocols to the Zones open for signature, and looks forward to continuing to engage with ASEAN in the hopes of signing the protocol to the Bangkok Treaty at the earliest opportunity. The United Kingdom also fully supports the creation of new Zones under the principles and guidelines adopted by the UN Disarmament Commission in 1999, on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

Views of the United Kingdom on issues that belong to the scope of the study

The United Kingdom believes the following issues should all be useful elements to discuss as part of the scope of this study.

The study should review how each of the existing NWFZs has been implemented in practice. The aim should be to understand how differences in Treaty obligations, definitions and organizational matters effect the costs and benefits for the Member States. Particular attention could be paid to the following elements:

- 1) Obligations
- 2) Geographical boundaries
- 3) Regional oversight or verification mechanisms
- 4) Transparency, consultation or other confidence building mechanisms
- 5) How Member State understand they benefit from membership of their Zone

The study should enable the identification of best practice and better enable the full, efficient and effective benefits to be realized for the Member States of each Zone. Further by identifying best practices, these can form the essential elements for inclusion and the operating mechanisms for future Zones in other regions. The experiences of Mongolia in these regards would also be most welcome.

This review should extend to the obligations and implementation of the protocols to each of the Zones, and to better understand how States who have signed or ratified these protocols can better implement their obligations. This should include assurances against the use of nuclear weapons, to the benefit of the Member States in compliance with their obligations within each Zone.

Further, the study should look at lessons learned from the NWFZs in terms of how these can be applied to reach and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. NWFZs have provided important trust and confidence building measures between States to implement and sustain non proliferation and disarmament. They have also shown how the combination of legal, political, technical and normative measures can work in tandem to promote disarmament, reduce tensions and build lasting security benefits for their members. Utilizing this study to better understand the interplay between these mechanisms, and how they can be implemented to build and sustain future regional, inter-regional and global disarmament arrangements, would be of significant importance, particularly in these times of increasing global tensions.

The study should also aim to fulfil the requirements of resolution 79/241 and make recommendations towards strengthening existing zones and the possible establishment of new zones. Any recommendation to establish new zones should be generic and not based on any specific region, such that the States of those regions can freely decide for themselves how to best implement them to the specific needs of their region. Further, based on the lessons learned from existing Zones, the study should look to make recommendations that could facilitate achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons.