67th session of the United Nations General Assembly
First Committee

*Explanation of vote by*

Mr. Guy Pollard
Deputy Permanent Representative of the
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
to the Conference on Disarmament

on behalf of France, the United Kingdom and the United States

L16 “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium”

*New York, 5 November 2012*

Mr. Chairman,

I am speaking on behalf of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to explain our negative vote on draft resolution L16 “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium”.

Mr. Chairman, this is not a new issue.

Despite some updates, this draft resolution continues to call for further action by the Secretary-General and UN member states, based on the alleged harmful effects of the use of depleted uranium munitions on human health and the environment.

The environmental and long-term health effects of the use of depleted uranium munitions have been so far thoroughly investigated by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environmental Program, the International Atomic Energy Agency, NATO, the Centres for Disease Control, the European Commission, and others.

None of these inquiries has documented long-term environmental or health effects attributable to use of these munitions. It is therefore regrettable that the conclusions of these studies are thus ignored.

It is further regrettable that the sponsors of this resolution have failed to quote the response from 2010 from the United Nations Environment Programme in its entirety and tried a partial quotation to strengthen their alleged claim. This quote reads as follows:-

“The main scientific findings were consistent across the three assessments. Measurements taken at the depleted uranium sites showed that, even in areas with widespread depleted
uranium contamination, the overall levels of radioactivity were low and within acceptable standards, with no immediate dangers from either particle based or waterbourne toxicity”.

Given the lack of tangible evidence to the contrary we do not recognise the presupposed potential risk to health and the environment and therefore do not support UN resolutions that presuppose Depleted Uranium is harmful.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.