



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

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Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on
Disarmament and Ambassador at large

at the

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First Committee
General Debate

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Chair,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as chair of the First Committee and the members of the Bureau on the assumption of their positions. In addition to the statement delivered by the EU, the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Chair, distinguished delegates, the international rules based order is under immense pressure, and the European security environment has changed dramatically. In this forum, in particular, we cannot disregard the unprovoked and unjustified acts of aggression against Ukraine, which have serious consequences for international security and stability and grossly violate international law, including the UN Charter. The Netherlands continues to condemn the Russian aggression and its atrocities against the people of Ukraine, like we have seen yesterday and today in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, in the strongest possible terms. We expect Russia to immediately withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders which include the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the oblasts Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. We strongly condemn the recent illegal referenda in Ukraine and call on all states and international organisations to reject the illegal Russian annexation of Ukrainian territory.

In light of this complex security environment and the rising geopolitical tensions, we welcome the commitments of states parties at the 10th NPT Review Conference. Let me underline once more that all states parties, minus one, recommitted to their past pledges and showed a willingness to adopt the draft

outcome document, which sometimes deviated far from the preferred national positions. This sends a strong message that the NPT remains key to international peace and security and in our view it is and remains the only credible path to a nuclear-weapon-free world. Moreover, it is a powerful display of support for multilateralism.

The near completion of the destruction of declared stockpiles of chemical weapons can also be considered an important achievement of multilateralism. Still, the use of chemical weapons in recent years in Syria, the attempts on the lives of Sergei Skripal and Alexei Navalny, as well as the assassination of Kim Jong-nam, are clear warnings that the global community must remain vigilant. The Netherlands is chairing the upcoming Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention and is committed to give the OPCW the tools it needs to fulfil its mandate. The continuing disinformation campaign by the Russian Federation further underlines the necessity to maintain a strong, nimble, and impartial organisation.

The Netherlands is fully committed to the strengthening and implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We see an urgent need to make strides towards an effective verification mechanism for investigating possible breaches of the Convention. Furthermore, every effort should be made to protect the integrity of the UN Secretary General's Mechanism, since it is the only existing independent mechanism to investigate alleged uses of biological weapons.

Mr. Chairman, the Netherlands is deeply concerned by the DPRK's escalation of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs and its recent launch of a missile over Japan. For that reason the sanctions regime as adopted by the Security

Council should be implemented fully and effectively by all UN Member States, until such time the DPRK takes concrete steps towards complete , verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

Equally concerning is the fact that Iran continues its enrichment activities and has failed to seize the opportunity to return to the JCPOA. Therefore, we urgently call on Iran to return to compliance.

In light of the rapid technological developments, the Netherlands emphasizes that the international governance around the responsible development, deployment and use of artificial intelligence in the military domain has to be strengthened. To this end, the Netherlands will host a ministerial conference to promote the Responsible use of AI in the Military domain.

The objective of this high-level conference, on 15 and 16 February 2023 in the Hague, is to agree on a common international agenda that will ensure that the development, deployment, and use of AI in the military domain will be within the parameters set by existing international law. We invite ministers from all over the world to engage with us and address these challenges.

Chair, regarding Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, the Netherlands remains actively engaged within the GGE discussions. Further regulation is required and autonomous weapons that cannot be used in accordance with international humanitarian law should be explicitly prohibited.

Having said this, the Netherlands strongly believes that all countries should have equal access to the peaceful uses of technology and therefore underlines the importance of the existing security frameworks for technology transfers.

The ever more frequent and destructive malicious cyber activities pose a serious threat. Therefore, all Member States should abide by the UN framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We support the Programme of Action as the best way forward, since it presents an inclusive, permanent platform to put the existing consensus framework into practice.

With regard to outer space we should ensure that all of humanity will be able to benefit from the economic and societal opportunities in the space domain, including new space actors and users. We believe that the most pragmatic and immediate way forward is through a step-by-step, behaviour-based approach. Supported by monitoring and verification, and not excluding the possibility of legally binding instruments, such an approach will help to reduce the risks of conflict in outer space.

Turning to conventional weapons, we call on all our Arms Trade Treaty partners to remain committed to providing transparency about arms exports and imports, and urge all countries, especially major arms exporters, to make arms export reports publicly available.

Mr. Chairman, the Netherlands very much welcomes the Political Declaration, led by Ireland, on protecting civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA), and related to this, calls upon all States to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions as well.

Likewise, significant progress has been made since the signing of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, but some challenges still remain. The recent

contamination of vast areas, such as those in Ukraine, is especially worrisome. Increased efforts are needed in order to accomplish our common goal of a world free of landmines.

Chair,

Achieving gender equality, empowering all women and girls, as well as including and amplifying the voices and concerns of underrepresented groups are key priorities for the Netherlands in the common quest to achieve a secure, just, and prosperous world for all. It is of the utmost importance that we continue to work together to enhance gender equality, inclusion and diversity through effective multilateralism.

In closing,

Let me underline that The Netherlands will continue to promote multilateralism as the key principle for addressing today's challenges. This meeting provides us with important opportunities to further strengthen the framework of treaties and conventions that is crucial for ensuring a secure and prosperous world built on the fundamentals of the rules-based international order.

A more-detailed version of this statement will be uploaded.

I thank you chair.