



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

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Netherlands to the UN in New York**

at

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Thematic discussion cluster 1-4

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Chairperson,

For this thematic discussion, I would like to highlight several issues regarding nuclear weapons, other WMD, space and conventional weapons.

[Nuclear]

Firstly, to uphold and strengthen the existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, we need to prevent any further postponement of the NPT RevCon and urge commitment of all states to all of its three pillars. We emphasize the importance of risk reduction and crisis management, and support the NPT's universalization, the CTBT's entry into force and the FMCT's conclusion.

Nuclear-weapon states share a special responsibility for implementing their obligations under Article VI of the NPT. In that light, the Netherlands welcomes the extension of New START and the renewed Strategic Stability Dialogue between the US and the Russian Federation.

The Netherlands supports various initiatives on nuclear disarmament, including the NPDI, the Stockholm Initiative, the IPNDV and the GGE on verification. We call for greater transparency and reporting on nuclear arsenals and an inclusive dialogue on nuclear doctrines.

Fundamental to the nuclear non-proliferation regime is the universal application of IAEA safeguards. We call upon Iran to refrain from further escalatory measures and revert to compliance with the JCPOA. We condemn the recent repeated missile tests conducted by the DPRK and its growing nuclear weapons- and ballistic missile programmes, which are in violation of UNSC Resolutions.

[Other WMD]

Secondly, the CWC and the BTWC are two indispensable instruments required to create an international community more resilient against, and better prepared for biological and chemical threats.

The world has witnessed a re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, for instance the attacks on Sergey Skripal and Aleksey Navalny, but also in Syria.

Consequently, Member States have imposed sanctions against Syria at the last Conference of States Parties, as Syria's delaying tactics to comply with the CWC, are no longer accepted.

Likewise, the Netherlands has joined a group of 45 countries that have invoked art 9 paragraph 2 of the CWC, demanding the Russian Federation to clarify the circumstances under which the attack on Mr Navalny in 2020, took place.

The OPCW is an essential institution to redress any violations under the CWC and hold those responsible for chemical attacks, accountable.

Covid-19 has illustrated that also *biological* threats pose serious, widespread security risks, impacting citizens' mental and physical health, infrastructure and economies. Biotechnological advancements will only increase those risks.

Each Member State must take the responsibility to strengthen the BTWC and increase preparedness for, and resilience against, health security threats: either for the sake of their own national interests, or out of global solidarity. Because, when it comes to health security, we are all as strong as the weakest link.

[Space]

Thirdly, the Netherlands believes that promoting awareness and transparency as well as strengthening international cooperation on space security, is crucial. Further efforts to create confidence building measures and space behaviour norms, rules and principles, can serve as a first step towards legally-binding agreements. Therefore, we continue to support the resolution submitted by the UK on reducing space threats.

[Conventional weapons]

Lastly, the Netherlands continues to call on all states and actors that are party to armed conflicts, such as in Yemen, to adhere to their obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law. In our joint effort to prevent violations, all states should review arms sales and export thoroughly and transparently.

The CCW has made important progress concerning Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) within the Group of Governmental Experts. Building on the eleven guiding principles adopted in 2019, the GGE should draft substantial recommendations to the 6th RevCon. We share the common understanding among States Parties that humans must have some form of control over autonomous weapons to ensure compliance with International Humanitarian and Human Rights Laws. Therefore, the Netherlands continues to advocate for the further elaboration of the concept of Meaningful Human Control.

[Conclusion]

To conclude, we call on the states that remain outside the key treaties to accede without delay and urge States Parties to comply with the Conventions and their pivotal institutions. Multilateral cooperation within those fora is essential in our collective pursuit of a safer world.

A longer, written statement for each cluster will be uploaded in e-delegate.