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STATEMENT BY

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On the occasion of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly,
First Committee,

Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons

NEW YORK, 18 October 2017
Chairperson,

Thank you. The Netherlands aligns itself with the EU-statement and would like to make remarks in its national capacity.

Financial situation of Geneva-based conventions
Allow us to start with a somewhat quintessential Dutch remark. The Geneva-based conventions on conventional weapons have been in difficult financial circumstances. We welcome the fact that finances have been discussed in the annual meetings of these conventions. Transparency and other measures are helping to address the financial issues, but we need to do more for a sustainable financial system. The Netherlands therefore believes additional efforts should be made towards improving the efficiency of the contribution process, discouraging non-payment and reducing the costs of meetings. Without financially sustainable Conventions we cannot do the work to implement them. We still have a lot on our plates in terms of reaching our objectives on conventional disarmament and arms control.

CCW Review Conference / Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems
We welcome the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems as a next step in the ongoing deliberations on this topic. We regret that the first week of the GGE could not take place, due to a lack of funding. We hope, however, that the progress made during the three previous Expert Meetings will provide a good basis for structured discussions. The Netherlands will, as before, actively participate in the discussions and further contribute by submitting working papers.

The threat of IEDs is of growing concern. In many conflicts IEDs harm in particular the civilian population. We need to continue to address IEDs, in all different forums, such as CCW, First Committee, and the APMBC – as many IEDs fall under the definition of anti-personnel mine. Additionally, the Netherlands is involved in the UNMAS-led working group on Improvised Explosive Devise Disposal - standards for UN operations, chaired by Belgium and China. These standards will continue to be developed in cooperation with relevant stakeholders and should supplement the current framework of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), which guides humanitarian mine action.

Chairperson,

Convention on Cluster Munitions
We strongly believe that it is possible to make cluster munitions a thing of the past. We were appalled to learn that the number of victims from cluster munitions more than doubled in 2016 as compared to the year before. We continue to condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor.

We commend the German Presidency for their extensive efforts last year. Further universalisation of the Convention is crucial to ensure its success. We therefore call upon all States that have not yet done so, to join this Convention.

Arms Trade Treaty
Since its entry into force the Arms Trade Treaty has set an international norm against irresponsible transfers of arms. States Parties will have to address substantive issues on implementation and universalization. The Netherlands remains fully committed to these goals and is proud to share with Sweden a seat in the Treaty’s Management Committee for the 2018-2019 term.

The Netherlands contributes to assistance and outreach, via the EU and nationally, to the Voluntary Trust Fund, the Sponsorship Program run by UNDP, Control Arm’s ATT monitor project, and the Stimpson baseline project.

Transparency
We stress the importance of transparency and reporting. In this respect, we would like to particularly underline the continued relevance of the UN Arms register, as not all States are State Party to the Arms Trade Treaty. We strongly encourage States to keep using this valuable instrument in particular, and to fulfill their reporting obligations in general.
**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

On the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention we are making progress toward our common goal of implementing all outstanding commitments under this Convention before 2025. We look forward to continue these discussions at 16MSP in December. We strongly believe that a more individualized approach for cooperation and assistance may help in this regard.

The Netherlands is willing to do its part in terms of mine free world. We commit 45 million euros for mine and cluster munitions related activities in 13 countries for the period between 2016 to 2020. Moreover, we contribute 3 million euros annually to the UNMAS Voluntary Trust Fund.

**Small Arms Light Weapons**

Small Arms and Light Weapons continue to be responsible for most arms-related casualties worldwide. We fully support the French Presidency of the UN Programme of Action. We believe that discussions on this topic should focus inter alia on stockpile management and synergies with other instruments.

**Explosive Weapons in populated areas**

To conclude, we take note of the international discussion on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We view the challenges posed by this topic in the light of International Humanitarian Law and compliance therewith. The Netherlands believes it is of the utmost importance to promote compliance and to ensure that the principles of IHL are respected.

Chairperson,