STATEMENT

AT THE

NPT PrepCom
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ON

Cluster II issues

BY

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Geneva, 2 May 2008
Mr. Chairman,

1. The Netherlands fully endorses the intervention just made by the Presidency of the European Union. From a national perspective, we would like to add the following observations.

2. This year’s Preparatory Committee marks a very special anniversary, as I mentioned in my previous statement under cluster I: Forty years ago the NPT was opened for signature, and since that moment in July 1968, much has been achieved with regard to the three pillars of the Treaty. Since then, several treaties and agreements on non-proliferation were signed that have demonstrated the value of the NPT as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime.

3. For the Netherlands, the system of treaties, agreements and standards continue to form the heart of the government’s policy on non-proliferation. At the same time, there is a need for being continuously aware of new, emergent security and proliferation risks. Within the existing international legal framework, the Netherlands is willing to add new instruments, use new techniques and assist in the development of new instruments that can be used in specific instances to counter new proliferation risks. The Proliferation Security Initiative, Resolution 1540, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism are recent examples of new instruments, all of which are fully supported by the Netherlands. A flexible approach, based on individual cases and developments, and using a mix of both old and new instruments, can help to contain the emergent risks of proliferation.

4. Over the last years, non-proliferation challenges have increased and the international community will have to deal with those challenges. It can only do so effectively if we work together, that is, through multilateral cooperation in the relevant fora.

5. Iran for example, still has not made full disclosure of its past nuclear research programme. It continues to defy the international community regardless of various UN Security Council Resolutions. Iran still refuses to accept full oversight by the IAEA, and it is continuing and even extending its enrichment activities.

6. The Netherlands welcomes progress in the Six Party Talks, and calls upon the DPRK to fully meet its commitments to provide disclosure of all aspects of its nuclear programs.
Mr. Chairman,

7. In the light of these challenges, the Netherlands strongly supports the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime. One of its valuable components is the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. Recently, the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs called on all 128 subscribing states to observe the confidence- and transparency building measures that this Code provides for, and to demonstrate a greater commitment to it. As outlined in the Minister’s statement at the Conference on Disarmament in March, the Netherlands is strongly committed to working towards universalisation and strengthening of the Code.

8. An important component of international cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation consists of the export control regimes, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime. The Netherlands will continue to support the strengthening of these regimes, including the relevant national laws and adequate enforcement procedures. We welcome the support of a growing number of countries which are not members of these export control regimes. It is a very welcome development that some of them are adjusting their domestic legislation in order to meet the guidelines which constitute the core of these regimes. By doing so, these countries are helping to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

9. Finally, the Netherlands supports the creation of new and the strengthening of existing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in order to improve regional stability and reduce the risk of proliferating nuclear weapons. The Netherlands wishes to refer to the EU Working Paper on Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones to be presented next week. In this working paper, the EU stresses the importance of the guidelines outlined in the 1999 UNDC substantive session.

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