STATEMENT BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR JOHANNES C. LANDMAN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, GENEVA


CLUSTER I (DISARMAMENT)

New York, 6 May 2009
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. For the Netherlands, strengthening non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control are important issues. We have contributed and will continue to support actively to the global non-proliferation regime, through the application and strengthening of international law (CTBT, the Hague Code of Conduct, the Wassenaar Arrangement). Non-proliferation and disarmament are pivotal to our security.

Mr. Chairman,

3. As a NATO-member we feel a special responsibility. We welcome the fact that NATO at the Summit in Kehl, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Alliance, has explicitly stated that it will continue to play its part in reinforcing arms control and promote nuclear and conventional disarmament in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. A security organization such as NATO, should address non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

4. Since last years’ Preparatory Committee we have seen hopeful signs of a new momentum. The winds of change that were announced by the speech of President Obama in Prague a month ago give rise to a renewed international effort, to a vision for a world without nuclear weapons, to effective multilateral cooperation and a strengthened non-proliferation regime. We welcome this approach. Now, we, all of us, have the responsibility to materialize these opportunities.

5. The reSTART of US-Russian nuclear disarmament is very important. The Netherlands therefore welcomes the negotiations between the US and Russia on a new START treaty to reduce US and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals. A treaty to follow up the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) will give an impetus to the international arms control and non-proliferation debate. It will thereby contribute to strengthen the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. A follow-up to the START-treaty will be an important first step.
6. We trust that this will lead to further reductions worldwide, a reduction in which all nuclear weapon states should be included. A bold successor, and that implies verification, to the START-treaty will also support our endeavours for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. CTBT constitutes an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and we take every opportunity to call for its ratification and entry into force. The Netherlands has been actively involved from the very first hour of the negotiations of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and has played an important role with respect to many different aspects of the Treaty throughout its establishment. The Netherlands continues to support the CTBTO; politically, financially, technically and with practical help. In this regard, I would like to mention the work of Special Representative Ambassador Jaap Ramaker to promote universal accession.

7. In the same context, the start of negotiations on a *verifiable* FMCT are a logical next step. Together with the CTBT, an FMCT is a necessary building block for a world free of nuclear weapons. However, an FMCT without verification could in the end only provide us with a treaty of which the implementation would be under continuous doubt. In our opinion the IAEA should take up the role of verifying such a treaty, since the IAEA Safeguards System, including the Additional Protocol, has demonstrated to provide an effective verification system for civilian nuclear facilities in NNWS and NWS alike. An FMCT, the CTBT and the follow up of START will contribute to the strengthening of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

8. It takes involvement, commitment of all parties to the NPT to move closer to the ultimate goal of worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons in accordance with the Treaty. The Netherlands calls upon all parties to embrace the responsibility they accepted when signing the treaty and show renewed commitment to the process of non-proliferation and disarmament. We hope for an equally constructive attitude from all groups as we all stand to benefit from disarmament and non-proliferation. All of us have responsibilities to the multilateral system. Let us show our constituencies that we are ready to give and take. We need to come up with broad-based initiatives to help move the debate forward. It is a responsibility which all of us have, not just some.