Statement by H.E. Ambassador Henk-Cor van der Kwast

Head of delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the 3th Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference

General debate
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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to congratulate you with your assumption of the Presidency of this 3th prepcom. We trust that under your leadership we will be able to create the framework that will lead to a successful review conference next year. In this endeavor you can count on the full support of my delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Frans Timmermans, confirmed in a letter to the Dutch Parliament on October 24st, 2013, the Netherlands is strongly committed to a world without nuclear weapons. For the Netherlands, the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

NPDI

The Netherlands fully subscribes to the statement presented by Japan yesterday on behalf of Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. The NPDI, a diverse group of 12 states that jointly span the globe, tries to promote the implementation of the 2010 NPT Action Plan through practical and pragmatic proposals. In doing so, it reaches out to other groups in the NPT-community by looking for common ground and by trying to bridge differences. The NPDI highly values the input by civil society. The Netherlands will host an event with PAX and other NGOs on May 2nd.

The Netherlands, attaches equal importance to all 3 pillars of the NPT. Let me shortly say something about all three of them.

Disarmament

While there has been some progress over the last years, we are not satisfied by the current pace of disarmament. The debate on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons underlines the need for urgent progress felt by many nations. Progress in the disarmament pillar clearly stays behind compared with the other two pillars.

Nuclear disarmament does not take place in a vacuum. In this respect the situation in the Ukraine gives reason for concern. The breach of the Budapest memorandum of 1994, which gave the Ukraine security assurances in connection to its accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state, has resulted in a change in threat perception in many capitals.
However, while the current political climate may not make nuclear disarmament easier, this should not be an excuse to lose sight of our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We call on all states possessing these weapons to redouble their disarmament efforts.

**Non-Proliferation**

The Netherlands considers the proliferation of nuclear weapons as one of the gravest threats to international peace and security.

The Netherlands is gravely concerned by the major proliferation threats to international peace and stability, including the DPRK, the remaining challenges on the nuclear program of Iran and the outstanding issues with Syria. All these cases must be addressed in a resolute way. We will further elaborate on these issues in our cluster 2 statement.

Strengthening of the international safeguards system is a priority for the Netherlands. The Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, supplemented by an Additional Protocol should be the international standard for verification. We call upon all States that have not yet concluded an Additional Protocol, to do so without delay.

**Peaceful uses**

The Netherlands attaches great importance to the prevention of nuclear terrorism and the strengthening of nuclear security. That is why we were proud to host the Nuclear Security Summit that took place in The Hague on 24 and 25 March. Participants committed to reducing the amount of the most sensitive nuclear materials, to enhance the security of the remaining material and to improve international cooperation in this field. They agreed to improve the international nuclear security architecture with a central role for the IAEA. They further agreed to introduce confidence building measures, to enhance the involvement of the nuclear industry in security related issues and to minimize plutonium stocks. In addition to this, 35 countries also committed themselves to strengthen nuclear security implementation by putting IAEA guidelines into national legislation. In a separate meeting, ministers of foreign affairs discussed a wider range of nuclear subjects which included disarmament and non-proliferation.

On the May 7th, the Netherlands Sherpa, Piet de Klerk, will brief those interested on the results of the NSS in The Hague. You are all invited.

**WMD free zone in the Middle East**

The Netherlands supports the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Like others, we regret the conference could not take place as foreseen but we continue to support the ongoing preparations and commend the tireless efforts of the Facilitator.

Mr. Chairman,

We will further elaborate on all of these issues in our cluster statements. I am also pleased to announce that the Netherlands will submit a report to the prepcom on its obligations with regard to Action 20.

Let me conclude by underlining that the Netherlands remains firmly committed to the implementation of the NPT and the 2010 Action Plan and will continue to come up with innovative, practical proposals for its implementation.