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

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Mr. Chairman,

The Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement of the EU and would in addition like to make the following remarks.

The Netherlands attaches great importance to article IV of the Treaty and fully recognizes the inalienable right of all States parties to peaceful uses of nuclear energy in conformity with articles I, II and III of the NPT. We fully agree with previous speakers who stated that the Treaty provides a fundamental and indispensable framework of confidence, establishing the necessary conditions under which peaceful uses and the transfer of nuclear technology and knowledge can take place.

IAEA

The Netherlands wholeheartedly subscribes to the pivotal role of the IAEA in facilitating the peaceful use of nuclear energy by States parties. The Netherlands is a strong supporter of the Agency’s Technical Cooperation Programme. The Netherlands has pledged its full target share to the Technical Cooperation Fund for the year 2014 and intends to continue to do so the coming years. Through the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), the Agency can make a unique contribution to sustainable development, including the Millennium Development Goals.

We also regard the Peaceful Uses Initiative, in which we take part through the EU, as an important extra-budgetary mechanism for the Agency to foster the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

Nuclear Safety

While fully acknowledging the undisputed benefits of technical cooperation, we can hardly overestimate the importance of rigorous implementation of safety and security measures. This is to avoid unnecessary risks to the health of citizens, workers, patients or the environment and to prevent that nuclear materials end up in the hands of terrorists or other malicious individuals and organizations. Although the responsibility for the implementation of sound safety and security measures lies with the State parties, we welcome the clear commitment of the Agency in this regard. We fully endorse the Agency in its guiding role to provide a framework for the continuous improvement of the level of safety and security measures and the conscientious implementation of these measures by all State parties.

Nuclear Security Summit

The Netherlands attaches great importance to the prevention of nuclear terrorism and the strengthening of nuclear security. This year was a special year in this respect as the Netherlands hosted the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague on 24 and 25 March. Central points of the NSS-process are the commitment to reduce the amount of the most sensitive nuclear materials, to enhance the security of all nuclear material and radioactive sources and to improve international cooperation.

The NSS-process has helped putting this challenge high on the political agenda. Nuclear security is a global challenge that requires a global response and in this respect it is highly relevant that the countries participating in the NSS strongly reconfirmed the central role for the IAEA.

The communiqué also has a number of new elements. For instance, leaders committed to minimizing stocks of plutonium. Also, the communiqué introduced the idea confidence building measures. Although
nuclear security is a matter of national concern, leaders recognized that States can take voluntary measures in order to increase other States’ confidence in their nuclear security. Finally, the increased emphasis on the relationship between States and the nuclear industry was also new in the communiqué.

During the NSS 2014 the Netherlands, together with the US and Republic of Korea, launched an Initiative to strengthen nuclear security implementation even beyond what was agreed in the NSS Communiqué. By supporting the Initiative States commit themselves to implement the intent of the IAEA recommendations contained in Nuclear Security Series 13, 14 and 15. Two-thirds of the countries that participated in the NSS (35 countries) committed themselves to this Initiative.

In this context, the Netherlands would like to draw attention to an NPDI working paper on the issue of nuclear security. In the paper the NPDI calls on all States of the NPT to also commit themselves to the implementation of those recommendations. On somewhat different note, the NPDI-paper calls specifically on the nuclear weapon states to make efforts to promote confidence in the effectiveness of security for non-civilian nuclear materials. Nuclear weapon states should affirm that nuclear security is at least as effective for non-civilian nuclear materials as for civilian materials. The Review Conference next year should make recommendations in this regard.

As an expression of its strong support for the work of the IAEA in the field of nuclear security, in 2013 the Netherlands contributed an amount of €1 million to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund.

Finally, 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.