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

Cluster 1

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Mr. Chairman,

Let me at the outset state clearly that the Netherlands is fully committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons as set out in article VI of the NPT.

Minister Frans Timmermans recently visited Hiroshima for the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. During this visit, he spoke with Hibakushas and witnessed firsthand the devastating effects and horrible humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Deeply impressed by what he saw and heard, he conveyed to the press: (quote) “Hiroshima cries out to the world: get rid of nuclear arms! That’s why we are here, that’s what we are trying to do” (unquote).

The humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are an issue of great importance for the NPT process. Together with the security dimension, the humanitarian issue underpins all our practical and sustained efforts aimed at achieving the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

In our view the best path towards a world without nuclear weapons is through a step by step process and by taking practical and concrete measures.

Nuclear Weapon States/P5

Under the NPT all states have responsibilities with regard to disarmament. However, the prime responsibility for further nuclear disarmament lies with Nuclear Weapon States. We appreciate the national reports by the P5. In the following days we will carefully study these reports. We welcome that the P5 agreed to use a common reporting form for that purpose, but do hope that it is their desire for transparency that gave them guidance in this decision and that they did not settle for the lowest common denominator.

We can see potential value of the P5 process. And we appreciate that there have been more regular meetings of the P5 on disarmament and understand that building mutual understanding, transparency and trust takes time. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we look forward to the results of these meetings. We request the P5 to de brief on their meetings, for instance in the CD or in other disarmament fora. This would enhance transparency, would open the process for scrutiny by other states and ideally would inspire hope that results will be achieved.

We welcome the statement of President Obama in Berlin (19/6) on further disarmament steps by the US. Implementation of the new START Treaty is an essential contribution to
nuclear disarmament. We believe that in the next round of negotiations on further reductions of nuclear arsenals between the US and the Russian Federation all types of nuclear weapons should be included, strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons, deployed or non-deployed.

**Building blocks**

During last year’s meeting of the Open Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations it was widely agreed that regardless of the path one prefers to follow, it is necessary to identify the various elements that are needed to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. The Netherlands is of the opinion that this discussion is valuable and should be continued in the broader context of the NPT. We therefore support the working paper on ‘building blocks’ that is led by Japan and look forward to continuing this discussion with all States Parties.

Building blocks can be of a unilateral, a bilateral, a regional or multilateral nature.

The entry into force of the CTBT and a Treaty that stops the production of Fissile Material for explosive purposes are essential elements of a multilateral nature.

**FMCT**

While we underline the importance to start negotiations on an FMCT, we welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts. We hope this group will produce a substantial consensus report that will bring us closer to the start of real negotiations.

The Netherlands has appointed a high level technical expert to represent its views in the GGE and has provided UNODA with a cost free expert for the duration of the GGE’s work, to support the GGE’s work.

**Practical steps**

Next to the building blocks, all nuclear weapon states can already now take practical concrete measures towards the total elimination of their nuclear weapons, including: greater transparency of their nuclear arsenals; further diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in their military and security concepts, doctrines and policies; de-alerting their nuclear forces to help lower the risk of inadvertent use; and reducing and ultimately eliminating all types of nuclear weapons, both strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed, in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

**Transparency**

Regarding transparency, we are pleased to announce that the Netherlands has submitted a report on its action 20 obligations. Together with Japan the NL delegation will host a side event with the International Panel on Fissile material entitled “Next Steps in Increasing Transparency of Nuclear Warhead and Fissile Material Stocks for Nuclear Disarmament” on May 5 in Conference Room 7. It will deal with the question how greater transparency about nuclear weapons and fissile material stocks can contribute further nuclear disarmament. Agreement on transparency can serve to enhance mutual confidence between nuclear weapon states but transparency also can promote trust and cooperation between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states.
Since 2009 the USA has disclosed the number of nuclear weapons and provided detailed declarations about fissile material stockpiles. We hope other Nuclear Weapon States will follow this practice.

**Progress?**

Although more needs to be done, there have been a number of encouraging developments towards nuclear disarmament. I mentioned the GGE FMCT already. The discussion on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons can invigorate the drive towards global zero. It is for this reasons that we actively participated in the technical discussions on this subject in Oslo and Nayarit. We hope the conference on the humanitarian impact in Vienna later this year will strengthen international cooperation. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the importance of the effectiveness of our disarmament endeavors.

Last year’s Open Ended Working Group on taking forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations and the High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament were Minister Timmermans read a statement on behalf of the NPDI were also positive examples of constructive and open discussions on nuclear disarmament. We express the hope that we can further build on the positive outcomes of these meetings in a constructive, including and non-divisive way through the NPT process.

Mr Chairman,

The disarmament pillar of the Non-Proliferation Treaty remains behind with the other two pillars. More can and should be done on nuclear disarmament, which is our common responsibility.

At the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague Minister Timmermans hosted a separate session for Ministers of Foreign Affairs which provided an opportunity to discuss the need for more action on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Netherlands remains firmly engaged on the road towards a world without nuclear weapons and will continue to make innovative, practical proposals to implement the 2010 Action Plan and stand ready to constructively engage with all other State parties on the common goals of a world free of nuclear weapons.