STATEMENT BY
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to the Conference on Disarmament

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First Committee
Thematic Debate on the Disarmament Machinery

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Mr. Chairman,

1. It is regrettable that for more than a decade, the multilateral disarmament machinery, and the CD in particular, has not met the expectations of the international community. The CD is failing to fulfill its mandate. It is failing to address the pressing security challenges facing the international community by producing effective multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation instruments through negotiations.

2. The Netherlands finds the stalemate in the CD unacceptable. We urgently need to revitalize the work of the CD. We urgently need to take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. In this regard we highly appreciate the Secretary General’s initiatives in support of such efforts.

3. The HLM of September 2010 and the follow up debate last July highlighted the variety of views states have on the causes of the stalemate in the CD. But above all, the HLM made clear that we need to move beyond mere deliberations and proceed to action without any further delay.

4. In New York, the UNDC regrettably once again failed to produce any concrete recommendations. We consider this as an additional indicator of the continued challenges facing the wider multilateral disarmament machinery.

Mr. Chairman,

5. If the multilateral disarmament machinery, especially the CD, is not able to overcome this crisis, the international community, and the First Committee in particular, will need to respond and give serious consideration to ways and means to overcome it.

6. Already states are discussing various options. Some options focus on giving the General Assembly a more central and active role. Others focus on implementing agreements previously reached in the CD and other relevant multilateral fora. And there are those that seek to intensify preparations for negotiations or seek to include a broader reform process of the machinery. Although these options are all somehow different, they have something in common. They all aim at improving global security, including through advancing to a world without nuclear weapons.

7. It is in this context that the Netherlands, together with South-Africa and Switzerland, has tabled a resolution on revitalizing the disarmament machinery and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations.

8. This resolution aims at consensus, at unifying all UN-member states around the need to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament and at taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. This resolution encourages states to build on the work that has already been undertaken and to explore, consider and consolidate options, proposals and elements for revitalization of the UN disarmament machinery, including the CD.

9. The resolution also recognizes the need to take stock, during this session of the GA, of all relevant efforts to be well prepared for the 67th session of the GA. We need to make sure that, if the CD fails again, that next year we do not find ourselves in the same place as this year. But that we have a basis to consider alternative options. I would like to underline, Mr. Chairman, that, should we fail to make substantive progress, in the view of the Netherlands all options should be up for discussion.

Thank you.