STATEMENT BY

Mr. Henk Cor van der Kwast
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on
Disarmament and
Disarmament Ambassador at Large

On the occasion of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, First Committee,
Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons

NEW YORK, 26 October 2015
Mr Chairman,

In addition to the statement of the European Union, we would like to make the following remarks.

**Arms Trade Treaty**

The Arms Trade Treaty sets the standard for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms. We have made good progress after the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. At the first Conference of States Parties of the ATT in Cancun we managed to deal with many procedural and financial issues, allowing for a smooth and solid start of this important Treaty.

We welcome that so far 77 states have ratified the Treaty and we call upon the 55 states that have already signed to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. We also call upon all other states that have not yet signed the ATT to accede to it as soon as possible.

Now we should turn our attention to the substance and make a start with implementation of the ATT. Transparency and in particular reporting by states, will be a determining element for the Treaty’s eventual success.

The Netherlands is willing to do its share, also financially. We contribute to assistance and outreach via the EU and nationally to UNSCAR, Control Arm’s ATT monitor project, the sponsorship programme run by UNDP and the Stimpson baseline project. We look forward to the next CSP that will be chaired by Nigeria.

**Cluster Munitions Treaty**

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is one of the success stories in conventional disarmament. We look forward to assume the Presidency of the CCM as of January.

The first review conference in Dubrovnik was a success and we thank Croatia for hosting this meeting. The political declaration underlines that cluster munitions should become a thing of the past and the Dubrovnik Action Plan sets out a detailed and forward looking roadmap for the next five years with concrete benchmarks for its implementation.

We are also satisfied that we could find a compromise on the financial model for the financing of the ISU. The Netherlands will contribute 250.000 euros to the ISU over the next 5 years.

The main challenges for the CCM remain strengthening of the norm of non-use of cluster munitions and further universalization of the Treaty. Civil society can play an important role in identifying possible solutions for these issues. We welcome this year’s resolution on Cluster munitions, which can help universalization purposes.

Compliance with the convention is of utter importance for the Netherlands. In this regard, we are deeply concerned about recent reports about the use of cluster munitions in Syria, Yemen, Ukraine and South Sudan. We call upon all governments to react to allegations in an open and transparent manner and take any necessary measures to protect its citizens from cluster munitions. In addition we call upon all states that are currently participating in military actions in Iraq and Syria to refrain from using cluster munitions.

**Anti-Personnel Landmine Treaty**

The problem of anti-personnel mines has decreased considerably over the last 15 years. However, more work remains to be done. We remain committed to our common political commitment to clear all anti-personnel mines before 2025 as agreed last year in Maputo thereby effectively ending the threat from these horrible weapons for once and for all.

It is up to us all to implement the Maputo action plan to reach this ambitious goal. We will have to work together to assist countries with mine fields to be able to live up to this commitment. As a major donor for mine related assistance, the Netherlands is willing to do its share. We fund programs in
Afghanistan, Cambodia, DRC, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Mozambique, the Palestinian territories, Somalia, and South Sudan.

**Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems**

Two years of discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems have answered some questions, but others remain and new ones were raised. We find it very positive that this is a concerted effort by both states and civil society.

One thing is clear: International law and in particular International Humanitarian Law is the framework we should look at with regard to the legality of weapon systems. While developing new weapon systems, both LAWS as well as weapon systems with more advanced autonomous functions in general, states should remain within the boundaries of international law. In this regard, it is important to keep monitoring the technical developments in this field.

To make progress, we believe our discussions could focus on deepening our understanding of what we exactly mean by 'meaningful human control'. The Netherlands has started a multiyear research program to develop our own national perspective on this issue. We should also continue to explore if we can agree on a definition of Autonomous Weapon Systems. Finally, we could continue to discuss Article 36 reviews with a view to find common ground on elements of Autonomous Weapon Systems.

We believe now is time to take our discussions one step further. At the upcoming MSP we would be in favor to establish a GGE that could come up with recommendations for further steps, which could be taken into account at next year's review conference.

**Small Arms Light Weapons**

Small Arms and Light Weapons continue to deserve our utmost attention. They are still responsible for most arms-related casualties worldwide and remain in practice the real weapons of mass destruction.

The chairman's summary of the second open-ended meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE2) provides a good basis for further discussions in the preparation for the Sixt Bi-annual Meeting of States that will take place in 2016. We would like to see clear references to the synergy with the ATT, standards for physical security and stockpile management, UN Security Council resolutions and arms embargo's, ammunition and assistance in technology transfers.

We should continue to develop the UN Programme of Action, while implementing the actions we agreed to in order to better deal with the continuing threat of these weapons.

**Explosive Weapons in populated areas**

We welcome the international discussion on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. This discussion should focus on concrete and practical measures in order to limit casualties and damage. Much will depend on the exact circumstances and context in which weapons will be used. Important is that international humanitarian law is respected. We are open to share best practices on the application of existing law.

Mr Chairman,

Conventional arms treaties make a real difference on the ground. It is important that we continue support this Treaties and their implementation. The Netherlands will continue to engage actively and is committed to make their implementation a success.