STATEMENT BY

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On the occasion of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, First Committee,

General Debate

NEW YORK, 9 October 2015
Mr Chairman,

Allow me first to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair and you will not be surprised if I say that you can count on the full support of this delegation.

In addition to the statement by the EU we would like to make the following remarks.

Iran
The agreement between the E3+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) of 14 July was truly a historic event.

Its final success will be measured by the full and timely implementation of the "Roadmap for the clarification of past and present outstanding issues regarding Iran's nuclear programme" as agreed on 14 July between the IAEA and Iran. Only by its full implementation Iran can reassure the international community that its nuclear program is of an exclusively peaceful nature. It is also important that Iran cooperates fully with the Agency regarding Possible Military Dimensions, as agreed in the roadmap.

GGE FMCT
The start and conclusion of an FMCT remains a priority for the Netherlands. We are very pleased that the Group of Governmental Experts on a Treaty Banning the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear and other Explosive Devices produced a substantial consensus report. The logical next step would be the start of negotiations, preferably in the Conference on Disarmament. However, as the current political situation does not allow negotiations to start, we should continue our preparations on the basis of the conclusions and recommendations of the report both in and outside the CD.

NPT revcon
The Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament structure and continues to deserve our full support.

We are disappointed that no consensus could be reached at the revcon the earlier this year, especially as we believe we were close to an agreement. Not reaching consensus at the revcon is not a failure of the NPT.

As a way forward we can continue to build on the 2010 NPT Action Plan and in particular on those actions that still need to be implemented. We should also consider using the relevant parts of the revcon document as at least a reference for our further work.
ATT
Less than a year after the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty we have made good progress. We look back with great satisfaction to the first Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty in Cancun. Many procedural and financial issues were dealt with at the conference, allowing for a solid start of this important Treaty. We would like to thank Mexico for hosting this first meeting. Now it is time to start with the implementation of the standard for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms which the Treaty has set.

CCM
The first review conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Dubrovnik was a great success and we would like to thank Croatia for hosting this meeting. The strong political declaration adopted in Dubrovnik 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 and contains concrete benchmarks for its implementation. The Action Plan is a good basis to work from for our Presidency of the CCM. The main challenge for this successful Treaty remains the strengthening of the norm of non-use of cluster munitions. In this regard, we are deeply concerned about recent reports about the use of cluster munitions in Syria, Yemen and Ukraine. The other challenge is further universalization of the Treaty. We therefore warmly welcome this year’s resolution on Cluster munitions.

APLC
Although much has been achieved in the Anti-Personnel Land-mine Treaty, more work in mine action remains to be done. Particularly if we strive to realize our common political commitment to clear all anti-personnel mines before 2025 as agreed last year in Maputo. We will now have to work together to assist countries with mine fields to be able to live up to this commitment.

Cyber
The cyber domain can be used by both states and non-state actors to threaten international security. Cybersecurity and promoting International peace and stability in the cyber domain are therefore essential. That is why the Netherlands organized the Global Conference on Cyber Space earlier this year. Cybersecurity needs to be considered in conjunction with themes like freedom and the potentials of economic growth online. In order to reduce the risks posed by insufficient security within the cyber domain, many ongoing bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives are contributing to increased transparency, confidence and stability in the cyber domain. These confidence building measures are of the greatest importance. The Netherlands is interested to participate in the GGE on cyber to further enhance these CBM’s.
LAWs
Two years of discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in the CCW have answered some questions on this important subject, but others remain. Also some new questions have been raised. For example we have to further deepen our understanding of what we exactly mean by ‘meaningful human control’ when we talk about these weapon systems.

However, we believe it 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.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV’s)
We attach importance to the issue of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. Armed UAVs in itself are not prohibited weapons under international law. Current and existing rules apply and there is no reason to consider the existing international legal framework inadequate to regulate the use of armed drones. However, there are general issues of international law regarding the use of force and the deployment of weapons that need further clarification and we need to start a dialogue on these issues. It is important that existing laws and transparency on the use of drones are upheld, and that is why the Netherlands remains committed to an open dialogue on the issue.

Space
Both in the CD and during this First Committee much attention is given to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Recent discussions in the CD underlined again that this is an acute problem that demands a speedy solution as more players are active in outer space.

In the long run, the Netherlands sees benefits in a Treaty on PAROS. But negotiating a Treaty takes time, while we think we should act now. A Code of Conduct can be our starting point as it can be implemented immediately. The meeting in June on a Code of Conduct under the able chairmanship of Professor Marchisio of Italy can serve as a basis for further work.

Mr Chairman,

We will further elaborate on these elements during the thematic debates.

Thank you.