STATEMENT BY

H.E. Mr. Henk-Cor van der Kwast
Ambassador Disarmament Affairs, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament, Netherlands Mission to the UN in Geneva

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items (items 89 to 105)
on the occasion of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly,
1st Committee

NEW YORK, 6 October 2016
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to congratulate you and the Bureau on your assumption of the chair; be assured 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.

The Netherlands remains fully committed to the goal of a world in which nuclear weapons have been permanently and irresponsibly abolished. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament structure and deserves our full support. Art VI of the NPT guides our disarmament efforts, providing the legal framework through which to reach Global Zero. We work towards its implementation through effective measures. Examples are the FMCT and Verification resolutions. I will elaborate further on nuclear issues during the thematic debate.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which came into effect in January of this year, reinforces the viability of the rules-based non-proliferation regime created by NPT. It also demonstrates the power of multilateral nuclear diplomacy. The Netherlands calls upon Iran to continue to adhere to its commitments under the JCPOA, including the provisional application of the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement.
January also brought a low point with the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on January 6th. This test was followed by multiple ballistic missile tests and ultimately another nuclear test on September 9th. The Netherlands condemns this provocative behaviour by the DPRK in the strongest possible terms. The regime should fully comply with the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, implement the NPT and submit all its installations to IAEA safeguards.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to make a few remarks on other WMD.

The 8th Review Conference of the BWC will take place later this year. An ambitious outcome, which reflects present day scientific developments and threats, and improves the effectiveness and scope of the treaty, is more crucial than ever. The Netherlands contributes to this both bilaterally and multilaterally through confidence building measures and through financial and in kind support.

The OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) concluded in its third report that the Syrian regime is responsible for the use of chemical weapons in two of the cases investigated by JIM. We reiterate that those responsible must be held to account for these crimes. The Netherlands calls upon Syria to comply with all its
obligations under the CWC, to cooperate fully with the OPCW and
to give complete openness about the full scope of its chemical
weapons programme.

Mr. Chairman,

The Netherlands assumed the Presidency of the CCM after the
successful 2015 Dubrovnik Review Conference. Our goals for the
Presidency were to build upon the Dubrovnik Action Plan through
further universalisation of the Convention, stronger
implementation and promotion of adherence to the norm of non-
use of cluster munitions. During the 6th Meeting of States Parties,
a new Political Declaration was adopted by consensus. In this
Declaration, we condemned any use of cluster munitions by any
actor and introduced an ‘end date’. In 2030, all Parties to the
Convention must have fulfilled their obligations under the CCM.

The Netherlands emphasizes the role and importance of the UN
Register on Conventional Arms which marks its 25th anniversary
this year. The UN Register continues to be a great transparency
and confidence-building measure in the field of the conventional
arms trade and we encourage all States to use this valuable
instrument.
The Netherlands is deeply concerned about the current financial situation of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention and especially about the real possibility that there is not enough money available to organize the 15th Meeting of States Parties in Santiago in Chile. To reach our common goal of a mine-free world in 2025 much work still needs to be done which cannot be postponed. We therefore would like to call on all member states and observers states to pay their contributions in full without delay, so that the 15th MSP can go ahead as planned.

Now that the structure and organization of the Arms Trade Treaty has been established, we face the most important challenges: to effectively implement the Arms Trade Treaty and to work towards its universalization. To further increase the speed and quality of the Treaty’s implementation by States Parties and Signatories, the Netherlands welcomes the recently established ATT trust fund. The Netherlands will contribute to this voluntary trust fund.
The Netherlands greatly values the important international discussion about autonomous weapon systems. We therefore strongly call for the establishment of an open ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) as next step in these discussions.

The increasing availability of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, armed and unarmed, not only to states but also to non-state actors, is of concern to us. Regarding non-state actors, we see an increased risk for UAV proliferation amongst terrorist organisations such as ISIS. The existing international legal framework applies to the use of armed drones. However, it is of utmost importance that existing laws are being upheld and increased transparency is being provided on export and usage. The Netherlands remains committed to an open international dialogue on this matter in order to guarantee transparent and responsible use.

The innumerable possibilities provided by the ever increasing development of the cyber-domain, spur development and connect people from around the world. However, cyberspace can also be used by both states and non-state actors to threaten international security. In order to reduce the risks the Netherlands promotes the applicability of international law, transparency, and stability. We do so in many ongoing initiatives, such as in the UN GGE.
Protecting the core functionalities of this cyber-domain is of utmost importance to ensure that all can reap its benefits.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is an acute problem that demands a speedy solution, as an increasing number of 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, thus in the meantime we should consider voluntary guidelines which can be implemented immediately.

Mr Chairman,

As I just highlighted there are many issues that demand our careful attention. We look forward to working together with you during this First Committee. Thank you.