Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

Mr. Reint Vogelaar, First Secretary, Permanent Representation to the Conference on Disarmament

at

the seventy-third session of the General Assembly,
1st Committee

on

Disarmament Machinery

New York, 31 October 2018
Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the floor. In addition, to the statement delivered by the European Union, we would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

This year, the Netherlands launched its **integrated foreign and security strategy**, which guides the Netherlands’ foreign and security policy for the period 2018-2022. Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, as well as cybersecurity, are among our key priorities within the prevention pillar of this strategy. Multilateralism and international cooperation are of fundamental importance to us since the international security environment directly affects our national security. Therefore, the Netherlands attaches great importance to the proper functioning of the disarmament machinery, as part of the wider UN system, to uphold and strengthen the rules-based international order.

We are of the view that only by stepping up our collective efforts, the international community can mitigate the existing and emerging challenges to our common security. In this context, we are encouraged by some of the positive developments within the disarmament machinery this year, which should be an overture for further progress.

Chairperson,

The substantive work conducted this year in the **Conference on Disarmament** and the adoption by consensus of four substantive reports for the first time in 22 years is a significant step, on which the CD must build in future sessions. The interactive exchanges in the subsidiary bodies, with the inclusion of experts from academia and think-tanks, show that progress is possible by focusing our efforts on the substantive issues on the CD’s agenda, rather than on procedural matters. While we were encouraged by the substantive discussions, it is essential to harness this momentum and move the CD forward to fulfilling its mandate with the early start of negotiations of disarmament measures.

The Netherlands was honoured to coordinate the meetings of Subsidiary Body 2, entitled “Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters”, with general focus on the ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The subsidiary body report agreed by consensus and the report of the High-Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group provide a solid basis for the CD to move towards negotiations of an FM(C)T. We call upon all delegations to show the utmost flexibility in order to commence negotiations on this important treaty at the earliest possible instance.

The fact that the **Disarmament Commission** for the second year in a row has been able to conduct substantive work in two working groups and concluded a report to General Assembly is another positive development. These two concrete examples show that progress is possible and necessary in times of rising tensions, if States are willing to continue to invest in multilateralism.

In a similar vein, we are encouraged by the growing attention for the issue of Gender in the Disarmament Machinery. Diversity in backgrounds and perspectives increases the capacity of delegations to come to the innovative and creative solutions. The growing number of delegations striving for equal participation, and increasing attention to gender perspectives are both encouraging and justifying our continued efforts on this issue.

Chairperson,

As outlined in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, some developments in the field of science and technology pose risks to the maintenance of international peace and security, the respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. The CD, and other disarmament fora and treaty bodies, should adopt a flexible approach in addressing these issues, including through
the negotiation of **disarmament measures** other than legally binding instruments, such as code of conducts, principles and guidelines.

While the Netherlands is convinced that the CD should make further progress by focusing on substance, it is also clear that we need to adapt the disarmament machinery to address contemporary and future challenges. The valuable participation of academia and think-tanks in the CD’s subsidiary bodies, have demonstrated once again the added value of civil society in disarmament fora. At the same time, we support the expansion of membership of the CD and further work on the improved and effective functioning of the CD. In our view, SSOD-IV would be a timely opportunity to review and update the disarmament machinery where necessary.

Chairperson,

Unfortunately, there is also reason for concern. The various treaty bodies inside and outside the UN depend on the timely and full payment of member states contributions. The structural none or late payment of contributions are putting these treaty bodies at risk, undermining the prospects for progress of the disarmament machinery as a whole. The Netherlands stands ready to work with other delegations on a sustainable solution for the current financial issues to ensure the proper functioning of the disarmament machinery.

Thank you.