Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

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at

Second Session of the Preperatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

General Statement

Geneva, 23 April 2018
Mr. Chair,

The Netherlands would like to align itself with the statements delivered by the EU, the NPDI, the Vienna Group of 10, and by Australia on behalf of a group of countries.

Let me start by congratulating you on your chairmanship.

As chair of the PrepCom 2017, we have enjoyed working with you and your team for over a year now. That cooperation has been excellent, and I can say beyond a doubt that this session of the PrepCom is in extremely capable hands. I also would like to congratulate ambassador Shahrul Yaakob of Malaysia for your election today as chairman of the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee next year. We wish you all the best and we look forward to cooperating with you as members of the Bureau. We hope the chair of the 2020 Review Conference can soon be endorsed.

Mr Chair,

I would also like to express my appreciation for the extensive outreach that you have undertaken, including the regional meetings in Mexico-City, Addis Ababa and Jakarta. You have spared no effort to maximize the transparency and inclusivity of your chairmanship.

Now, it is our collective responsibility to bring this PrepCom to a good end. We all know we are facing many challenges. However, instead of focusing on these difficulties, we should use this opportunity to discuss how we can take steps forward. How we can elaborate some of the building blocks that we will need to make this review cycle successful.

We believe we already have a basis on which we can build. Last year, the Netherlands issued a summary of the PrepCom 2017, under its own authority as Chair. This could be a helpful starting point for finding building blocks for success. The Netherlands submitted a working paper this year highlighting areas where progress might be possible. We will present this paper during a side event this Wednesday at lunchtime. You are all very welcome to attend.

The 2017 PrepCom Chair also elaborated eight guiding principles that reflect our joint interests and shared benefits of the NPT regime. These could be a starting point in our search for common ground and we hope they receive support from the NPT States Parties.

Mr. Chair,

The current security environment is challenging. But it can also help focus our efforts. By devising a number of questions that may help to guide our discussions, we could break down our challenges and make them more manageable. Let me pose some of these questions. There will no doubt be more.

The first question is:

What message can we send to the DPRK, how can we ensure that its violations of Treaty norms do not erode the authority of the Treaty? But also: what can we do to prevent violations of the Treaty from happening in the future, starting by looking at Article X?

Second:

What can we do to reinforce the norm of non-use of nuclear weapons, core rationale of the NPT, for example by elaborating risk reduction measures, or by strengthening negative security assurances?

Third:

Can we identify steps towards further disarmament that we can agree on during this review cycle? And what would a nuclear-weapon-free world look like?
Fourth:

How can we strengthen the third pillar of the NPT? How can we ensure that the benefits of nuclear technology benefit all NPT members and serve the implementation of the SDGs?

Fifth:

What challenges does the IAEA face in the implementation of its safeguards mandate, and how can these challenges be met?

Sixth:

What can we do to enhance the NPT working methods for the review cycle to be more effective, more efficient, allow for more substantive discussions, react better to challenges and developments, and maximize the ownership of the Treaty amongst all of its states parties?

And last:

How can we promote the equal, full and effective participation of both men and women in the NPT context? And how can we ensure knowledge transfer, stimulate education and critical thinking on these issues?

Mr. Chair,

The Netherlands will work hard to formulate answers to these and other questions. We will try to contribute to finding common ground for a successful conclusion of this conference.

This should not preclude us, at the same time, from engaging on issues where our positions are further apart. However, these should not dominate our discussion to such an extent that they may negatively affect the outcome of this review cycle. That would be counterproductive and leave all of us in a worse situation.

To conclude, Mr. Chair,

A little over two months ago, when minister Kaag was here in Geneva, she stated that if things do not work, we must blame ourselves and do something about it. She then referred to the Conference on Disarmament, but it equally applies to the NPT.

Although the geopolitical context may be difficult, it is our job to overcome challenges and move the NPT forwards. There is enough for us to work on, so let us get to it. You have our full support.