Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
delivered by
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at the
Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020
Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation
Treaty

on
Cluster II, Nuclear Non-Proliferation

New York, 3 May 2019
Mr. Chair,

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would further like to refer to the paper of the Vienna Group of Ten and make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

Convinced that the proliferation of nuclear weapons would seriously increase the risk of nuclear war, our countries, more than 50 years ago, agreed not to spread nuclear weapons nor spread the material, equipment or knowledge for the development of nuclear weapons and only develop the peaceful use of nuclear energy within the framework of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The IAEA’s safeguards system is thus key for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. As the NPT drafters 50 years ago foresaw, the IAEA has developed its safeguards methods in order to improve their effectiveness and efficiency and in order to keep pace with technological developments. The Netherlands fully supports this continuous improvement of the IAEA safeguards regime, including the standardisation of internal processes through the so-called State level concept.

The NPT requires that non-nuclear weapon States party to the NPT conclude safeguards agreements with the IAEA. Only with both a CSA and an AP in force the IAEA can conclude the absence of undeclared nuclear material and nuclear facilities in a State. NPT States parties should therefore affirm that a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol represents the current verification standard under Article III. The NPDI published a paper on this topic at last year’s PrepCom [https://undocs.org/NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.29]. We call on countries with a small quantities protocol to ratify the amended SQP. States that need support with the development of safeguards have several options for assistance from both the IAEA and other States party. The Netherlands stands ready to support other Member States and the IAEA with the practical development of safeguards.

**Export Controls**

Mr. Chair,

Effective export controls form another key component of the non-proliferation regime. We have all agreed, under Articles I and II of the NPT, to ensure that exports do not directly or indirectly assist nuclear-weapon programmes and that they are in full conformity with the NPT. Thus, the Netherlands is strongly committed to upholding the highest standards of export controls, and strives for optimal transparency in this field. We consider export control regimes, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Zangger Committee and the Missile Technology Control Regime, to greatly benefit the implementation of Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT. We call on all States to adhere to and effectively apply export control mechanisms, in full conformity with the NPT and Security Council resolutions 1540 and 2325.

**CTBT**

Another important element of the non-proliferation regime is the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). By bringing a legally binding and verifiable end to nuclear weapons testing, the CTBT will help to prevent the development of nuclear weapons. It therefore reinforces both the disarmament process and our non-proliferation efforts, making it of the utmost importance that the CTBT enter into force without delay. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT, in particular the eight Annex 2 States, whose ratification is necessary for the CTBT’s entry into force. We call on Egypt, China, Iran, Israel, and the US to ratify the CTBT and on the DPRK, India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the treaty in order to bring it into force.
Withdrawal

Let me also draw your attention to the issue of withdrawal from the treaty. NPT states parties should agree on clear recommendations concerning the consequences of the exercise of the right in article X without revising, altering, or limiting the right of withdrawal itself. We stress, in this context, that states remain internationally liable for violations of the treaty committed prior to withdrawal; additionally, withdrawal does not affect any right, obligation or legal situation of the parties created through the execution of the treaty prior to its termination. This means that any materials or technology a state required while being party to the NPT must remain committed to peaceful uses. We strongly recommend that NPT States parties agree to incorporate clauses to that end in any supplier agreements, contracts or any other arrangement concluded with other NPT States.

Mr. Chair,

If we mean to strengthen the NPT regime, that means we must also address those situations where the norms in the Treaty are challenged.

DPRK

We call on the DPRK to honour its obligations and return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards regime without delay. We further call on the DPRK to refrain from further missile and nuclear testing and to continue diplomatic consultations. The goal of these efforts can only be complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Syria

In 2011 the IAEA Board of Governors concluded that Syria did not comply with its obligations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement. We call on Syria to cooperate with the IAEA on this matter and to sign and ratify an Additional Protocol.

Mr Chair,

Iran/ JCPOA

We have seen that the NPT regime can meet challenges. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is an important achievement of the international non-proliferation efforts, which subjects Iran to the world’s most robust verification regime. The Netherlands fully trusts the IAEA to be objective, utterly professional and able to implement this important verification task. We have supported the IAEA’s implementation of the JCPOA with EUR 200,000,- every year since its inception.

The JCPOA thus far has proven its value. In its fourteen consecutive reports since Implementation Day, the IAEA has confirmed that it has been able to verify Iran’s nuclear-related obligations under the JCPOA. The Netherlands deeply regrets the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and the subsequent re-imposition of sanctions, which undermines the JCPOA. We call on Iran to ratify the Additional Protocol without further delay as an important confidence building measure.

WMD Free zone – Middle East

Finally, Mr Chair, the Netherlands expresses its full support for the establishment of a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East. We call on all States in the region to cooperate in order to allow the organisation of a conference on this issue in such a manner that all States in the region can participate.