



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

**Ms Marjolijn van Deelen, Head of Department for Non-Proliferation,
Disarmament and Nuclear Affairs**

at

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

on

Cluster I, Nuclear Disarmament

Geneva, 25 April 2018

Thank you Mr Chair,

1. Looking at today's international climate, our **security environment** has changed – and in many respects deteriorated – over the past years. We see geopolitical and economic power shifts, increased instability and insecurity in great parts of the world. We see accelerating technological developments, an increase in hybrid warfare and tensions on the rise in amongst others Europe.
2. In order to prevent the situation from worsening, making progress on the NPT's nuclear disarmament obligations towards our **common goal of a world without nuclear weapons** is a high priority for the Netherlands. We are investing a lot of energy in a progressive approach on disarmament and will continue to do so.

Mr Chair,

3. The **Non-Proliferation Treaty** is the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. As such, it is an essential part of the modern collective security system. The current international geopolitical challenges underline the important role of the Treaty and the need to uphold and strengthen it.
4. We need to establish what work must be done to move further towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Let me highlight some issues that the Netherlands considers as core elements of the implementation of **Article VI**.
5. A first step would be to reinforce the nuclear taboo, to ensure that our record of **non-use** of nuclear weapons continues. Indeed, this is a core aim of the NPT, reflected in its preamble. That is why we call upon NPT states to discuss steps to **reduce the risks** of a nuclear war.
6. Second: we need to restore trust and build confidence in the field of disarmament. **Transparency** is of key importance. The Netherlands also calls for increased **reporting**, especially by nuclear-weapon states. This should underpin our discussions on disarmament.
7. Third: the Netherlands remains firmly committed to a **ban on the production of fissile materials** for nuclear weapons. Such a step would make a crucial contribution to realizing our non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. The high-level FMCT expert preparatory group process, which we co-sponsor with Canada and Germany, offers an important opportunity to make progress on this issue. We look forward to the group's second session in May/June this year, including the adoption of its final report. The Netherlands is also honoured to have been appointed coordinator of subsidiary body 2 in the Conference on Disarmament, which will deal with the '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'. We call on all members of this group to exert all efforts to achieve real progress.
8. Fourth: we are equally keen to see work on **verification** further take shape, as a world free of nuclear weapons and the reductions leading up to it, will need to be verified. We look forward to the GGE on verification in May and will actively contribute to a positive outcome. We will also continue our contribution to the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). The more issues we can discuss and deal with in the field of verification, the better picture we get of what a world without nuclear weapons should eventually look like. During this review cycle, we should also consider how nuclear disarmament verification initiatives fit into the disarmament processes.
9. Our support for the **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty** will continue and we call on all states that have not yet ratified the Treaty, in particular the Annex II states, to do so expeditiously.
10. **Negative Security Assurances** are important for building trust and confidence and can thus be seen as an important intermediate step towards a global zero. We look forward to continuing our discussions in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr Chair,

11. We note with appreciation that the parties to **New Start** have announced that they met the central limits by their 5 February 2018 deadline. We encourage the US and Russia to extend this Treaty and seek further reductions to their arsenals. The Netherlands believes that all non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe should be included in new reductions, in a reciprocal and verifiable way.
12. The Netherlands has serious concerns with regard to Russia's compliance with the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty** (INF). We call upon the parties involved to continue active dialogue on the INF in order to preserve it and to ensure its full and verifiable implementation as this treaty represents an important milestone on the road towards nuclear disarmament.

Mr Chair,

13. To conclude, the Netherlands is ready to continue contributing to a positive agenda for the 2020 Review Conference. We believe the only way to make progress is through finding a way together, based on common ground. We should actively work on building trust by engaging in a true dialogue where we listen to each other's positions, where we bring something to the table and endeavour to find compromise. It is the only way in which we can make 2020 a success.