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# Conference on Disarmament

26 September 2023

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## **Note Verbale dated 12 September 2023 from the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva transmitting the statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the thematic debate on transparency in armaments as delivered by H.E. Robert in den Bosch, Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament on 17 May 2023**

The Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and has the honour to refer to the attached document containing the statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the thematic debate on transparency in armaments as delivered by H.E. Robert in den Bosch, Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament on 17 May 2023.

The Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament kindly requests that the attached document will be recorded as an official document of the 2023 Conference on Disarmament.

The Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament the assurances of its highest consideration.

## Annex

### **Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the thematic debate on Transparency in Armaments, Conference on Disarmament, as delivered by H.E. Ambassador Robert in den Bosch, Permanent Representative to the CD, Geneva, 17 May 2023**

Madame President,

Thank you for organising this thematic debate on transparency in armaments. As we fully align ourselves with the EU statement, I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Madame President, the Netherlands greatly values transparency in the area of arms export control. Transparency in conventional arms trade enhances the insight in arms transfers while paving the way for dialogue, trust and accountability among States. One of the key mechanisms to uphold transparency is the UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA), which includes an annual overview of reporting States' military imports, exports and holdings. During last week's intersessional meetings for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), many of the States present today demonstrated their commitment transparency in armaments and recognised the value of reporting arms transfers. The UNROCA and ATT are two great examples of mutually reinforcing reporting initiatives to strengthen confidence-building efforts.

The Netherlands recognises that States have a clear and legitimate right to acquire conventional arms as a means of self-defence and to implement crisis management operations. Given the current geopolitical climate and whilst respecting considerations regarding national security considerations, for example in the context of arms transfers to support Ukraine's legitimate right to self-defence, we call on all States to fulfil their reporting obligations and encourage all States to also include the overview of their international transfers of small arms and light weapons. As the transfer of arms comes with significant potential risks for human suffering, we must remain committed to transparency in armaments.

Madame President,

We should also continue to work towards increased transparency on nuclear weapons in order to create a climate of trust between States and establish common ground for dialogue and negotiations.

Without clarity on doctrines and existing arsenals, the negotiations on and verification of nuclear weapons reductions become very problematic. Therefore, increased transparency is a prerequisite to establishing common ground for dialogue and negotiations that can facilitate further reductions in nuclear weapons towards their complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination.

Transparency is important not only in nuclear disarmament, but also in reviewing implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and arms control in general. We need to look for concrete measures to improve the Review Cycle, for instance enhancing the role of national implementation reports in the NPT Review Cycle. A topic the NPDI has contributed to, and which we would like to discuss at the meeting of the working group on Strengthening the Review Cycle in August this year. Exchange of information about nuclear doctrines and arsenals contribute to confidence-building and thereby enable further nuclear weapons reductions. Moreover, enhancement of transparency measures favours better functioning of the accountability mechanism of responsibility, especially by Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS) in demonstrating their implementation of all Articles of the Treaty, in particular Article VI.

Madame President, the Netherlands proposes that all NWS and NNWS continue to report regularly on their undertakings, using the standard reporting form proposed in 2017

by the NPDI. We strongly encourage the NWS to agree upon a 'standard reporting form' and reiterate that all States report at least twice in a NPT Review Cycle.

Let me conclude by saying that enhancing national reporting, both on nuclear stockpiles as well as on conventional arms, is an indispensable tool to achieve greater transparency and build confidence among States. We consider it crucial to the international peace and security framework, and it can therefore count on the staunch support of the Netherlands.

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