
Conference on Disarmament

26 September 2023

Original: English

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 High Level Segment delivered by H.E. Wopke Hoekstra, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on 27 February 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 High Level Segment delivered by H.E. Wopke Hoekstra, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on 27 February 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 High Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament as delivered by H.E. Wopke Hoekstra, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Geneva, 27 February 2023

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In the history of this Conference, there has never been a greater need for it than there is today.

Russia's unwarranted, unprovoked and illegal war in Ukraine is a gross violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and international law.

It has far-reaching consequences, and poses a serious threat to global security and the international order.

We must stand together and demand an end to this war of aggression.

And in addressing Russia's invasion, we must also reflect on the broader implications for multilateralism.

It's imperative that we find ways to discuss arms control measures, and ensure strategic stability.

Both the European and the global security architecture require our constant attention.

The Conference on Disarmament is the right forum for this – but we can't afford to remain stuck in deadlock.

The world needs a functioning body to discuss such vitally important issues.

So I call on all members to engage in a constructive dialogue based on an agreed working programme, and to restart our work towards a safer and more peaceful world.

I also call on all members to embrace the power of inclusivity and to keep the door open for all non-member states who want to express their views.

We must prevent the further politicisation of the Conference. And we cannot allow UN member states, international organisations or NGOs to be blocked from participating for political reasons.

And I call on all members to address risk reduction measures and outer space security with the urgency they deserve.

In the current, heated geopolitical climate, military-to-military contacts, transparency and information exchange are more important than ever.

We must ensure that de-escalating dialogue always remains possible, and combine it with a sustained effort towards nuclear disarmament.

And finally, it's our duty to preserve outer space as humanity's common heritage.

Responsible behaviour remains the guiding principle for ensuring a safe, secure and sustainable outer space.

We must therefore adopt a step-by-step approach in order to enhance the normative framework and establish legally binding measures vis-à-vis our actions in outer space.

As a concrete step in this direction, the Netherlands commits not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests from this moment on.

If we don't take action now, future generations will reap the consequences of our inaction.

So let's work together to ensure a better political legacy – and leave behind a safer world.

Thank you.

Advance copy