
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 at the thematic debate on nuclear disarmament verification as delivered by H.E. Robert in den Bosch, Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament on 15 August 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 nuclear disarmament verification as delivered by H.E. Robert in den Bosch, Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament on 15 August 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 Nuclear Disarmament Verification Conference on Disarmament as delivered by H.E. Ambassador Robert in den Bosch Permanent Representative to the CD, Geneva, 15 August 2023

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes your initiative to organize this thematic debate on nuclear disarmament verification. I would also like to thank the panelists for their useful and insightful inputs and the Chair of the GGE on Nuclear Disarmament Verification for giving us an update on its work.

The Netherlands aligns itself fully with the EU statement, and I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

The NPT was, is and remains the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and a fundamental part of the global collective peace and security architecture.

It is therefore regrettable that last month, the working group on further strengthening the review process could not agree on concrete recommendations to the first session of the PrepCom for the 2026 Review Conference of the NPT. Having said that, we welcome the constructive nature of the discussions that took place and the broad support for the draft recommendations tabled by the Chair of the working group. We look forward to continuing the discussion on measures to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, coordination and continuity of the review process at the second session of the PrepCom in Geneva in July next year.

Mr. President,

We recognize the significant challenges to the disarmament process posed by the current security climate. However, that does not take away NPT States Parties' obligation to pursue and achieve the full implementation of Article VI. The Conference on Disarmament can play a key role in doing so. We have work to do on increasing transparency and accountability, and to build confidence; essential steps towards creating effective verification regimes.

As I said in Vienna two weeks ago in the general debate of the first session of the PrepCom, trust in arms control has always been a scarce commodity, it was never unconditional, it was "trust but verify".

Verification therefore is an essential part of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. Over the past years, progress has been made in building a common understanding, including through the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) and the GGE, and by engaging in other initiatives such as the QUAD or the Nuclear Disarmament Verification exercise. These efforts are important and positive developments towards the implementation of Article VI of the NPT.

And we do not have to start from zero. The New START Treaty, for instance, has shown the role of verification for meaningful arms control and non-proliferation. Like the EU in its statement, I hereby re-emphasize the call on Russia to immediately return to compliance with the New START Treaty and fulfil its obligations under the Treaty.

In addition, given the rapid and extensive build-up of China's nuclear arsenal, I would like to repeat my earlier call on China to take measures to improve transparency regarding its nuclear weapons arsenal, to refrain from further nuclear build-up and to pursue new risk

reduction measures. Let me also underline that a lack of transparency hinders any dialogue on verification, including in the CD.

Mr. President,

The Netherlands remains committed to comprehensive, irreversible, and verifiable nuclear disarmament in line with article VI of the NPT. In our view this must go hand-in-hand with efforts to strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Robust and effective verification is but one way to contribute to those goals.

I look forward to hearing the views of other delegations today, but also to our discussion on Thursday on ways to revitalize the CD. That discussion is intrinsically linked to what we discuss today. Because, despite our political differences and strategic interests, we share a common duty: to engage in a constructive dialogue, including on nuclear disarmament verification.

Mr. President, I thank you for giving me floor.

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