



Kingdom of the Netherlands

## **Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

to be delivered by

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Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands  
to the Conference on Disarmament and Ambassador-at-large  
for Disarmament Affairs

at the

**Eightieth Session of the First Committee of the United  
Nations General Assembly**

on

**General Debate**

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Chair,

Allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. In addition to the statement delivered by the EU, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Eighty years ago, the United Nations was founded amid the ashes of the Second World War. Back then, a promise was made: to save future generations from the scourge of war. We are those generations. And today, as we mark 80 years of the UN, and 80 years of multilateralism, we must confront an uncomfortable truth.

The world is experiencing levels of violence unprecedented in the UN era. 2024 turned out to be the deadliest year for aid workers and journalists ever recorded. And, with wars waging in Ukraine, the DRC, the Middle East, Sudan, and other places, 2025 may turn out to be among the deadliest years for civilians since World War II.

If we are serious about preserving more than a semblance of strategic stability, then this Committee should be the institution to seek out solutions for the security challenges we are facing. In times of uncertainty, mistrust and strategic rivalry, effective

arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives are not naïve; they are a necessity.

Chair,

Among the most striking features of today's conflicts is the use of uncrewed vehicles, Artificial Intelligence and other new and emerging technologies. The accelerating pace of military technological developments clearly brings new opportunities: AI can help protect military personnel, improve precision and with it decrease human suffering, and support logistics and planning. But without a careful approach, emerging technologies can also lead to irresponsible or even bad decision-making, scale errors, and bias.

These are not trivial matters but matters of life and death, which are increasingly intertwined with high-speed decision making by machines. The use of such technologies can result in grave consequences for civilians in conflict areas. Therefore, the Netherlands keeps a precarious balance: from a perspective of national security, acquiring certain capabilities has become a military necessity. But we do so in full compliance with all applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. And where current regulations fall short, we seek international cooperation to strengthen and build upon the existing applicable international legal framework.

We do not stand alone when trying to navigate this complex field. For instance, in the framework of the GGE LAWS, the 128 High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons display a shared commitment to make tangible progress on addressing the complex issue of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems.

Chair,

Last year, UN Member States adopted the the resolution on Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (AIMD), submitted by the Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with overwhelming support.

Building on this momentum, we will table a follow-up resolution, with the recently published SG report as the basis for new discussions. We propose to organize a three-day informal exchange of views in 2026. This will serve as a shared baseline for the international community to take this agenda further over the coming years. We invite all delegations to join, contribute and help build the international agenda for AI in the military domain.

Chair,

Let me continue with some reflections on our work here and in Geneva and begin with stressing the irony of the moment. Right

now, when the geopolitical situation in the world seems to demand our most urgent attention, crucial elements of the Disarmament Machinery seem to be grinding to a painfully slow pace if not complete stand-still. Although the current situation in the world certainly does not help, the inability of the Disarmament Machinery to produce tangible results is not new. And, sadly, it has become systemic.

Let me take the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. It has a good track record, if measured from its inception. However, the quote-unquote "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community" has negotiated zero new agreements, treaties or conventions in the last 30 years. This is not to say that the CD has no purpose, but for the Netherlands the moment has come to consider if the resources put into it are still proportional to its output. And let us not wait until the 100th anniversary of the UN Charter. Let us make use of the momentum of UN80 to take a fresh look at the Disarmament Machinery in its entirety: the CD, UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and the First Committee. There is no need to wait for an SSOD-IV, we can do it here and now and use the timeslot on 30 October wisely.

Chair,

Let me conclude.

As Molière already said: “Plus grand est l'obstacle, et plus grande est la gloire de le surmonter” (the greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it). This is also valid for the Disarmament Machinery. Yes, we may be facing more difficulties and a higher level of complexity than ever before, but it would help if we stop doing what we have been doing for the last thirty years: to try and address all issues before starting to negotiate, out of fear to get a result not 100% to our national liking. This is a zero-sum approach, while we should be valuing compromise for the common good of all. There is no time to lose, let us start now.

Thank you, Chair.