



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

**H.E. Robbert Gabriëlse, Permanent Representative to the
Conference on Disarmament**

at

the Conference on Disarmament

on

Negative Security Assurances

Geneva, 28 June 2019

Mr. President,

Thank you for providing this opportunity to address the issue of Negative Security Assurances under agenda item 4, one of the four core issues on our agenda. [Allow me also to take this opportunity to thank the panelists for their insightful presentations and the Austrian Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs Mr. Alexander Schallenberg for addressing the CD today.]

The Netherlands regrets that last year the Conference on Disarmament was not in a position to adopt a consensual report on the work subsidiary body 4. As we believe that, the discussions in SB4 were useful and the CD made some progress by creating a better understanding among delegations. In this context, we considered the mapping out of existing NSAs through the matrix a useful exercise that could be continued within the CD, while we remain open to consider other proposals for further work on this issue. In the absence of a consensus report to build on, I will use this opportunity to reiterate some of the key considerations for the Netherlands on NSAs.

We are of the view that non-nuclear weapon states under the NPT have a legitimate interest in receiving unequivocal and legally binding security assurances from nuclear weapon states. After all, those states have committed themselves to not build, acquire or possess nuclear weapons. In this context, the Netherlands recalls UN Security Council Resolution 984 (1995) and the subsequent resolutions 1887 (2009) and 2310 (2016) and urges all nuclear weapon states to respect their commitments in full with regard to security assurances. Moreover, those nuclear weapon states that have not yet done so are encouraged to extend security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states parties to the NPT.

Mr. President,

Negative Security Assurances play a central role with regard to nuclear non-proliferation and are an important measure contributing to disarmament. They reduce the incentives for acquiring nuclear weapons by non-nuclear weapon states, while also reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in the doctrines of nuclear weapon states. Moreover, providing more clarity and strengthening existing security assurances could serve as an important confidence building measure between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states. In particular, in the current international security environment more clarity on existing assurances and a dialogue on the doctrines of nuclear weapon states will help build the confidence needed for further steps on nuclear disarmament.

Concerning the issue of nuclear weapon free zones, the Netherlands underlines the importance of them as reflected in Article VII of the NPT, also in the context of NSAs. They enhance regional and global peace and security and are means to promote nuclear disarmament, stability and confidence within their respective regions. We note that the respective protocols of the Treaties of Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba, and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone in Central Asia have not yet been signed or ratified by all the nuclear weapon states. Only Additional Protocol II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been ratified by all nuclear weapon states, although with reservations and interpretative declarations. We urge nuclear weapon states to further strengthen the regimes of the nuclear weapon free zones. In this context, we welcome the recent dialogue in Geneva between the Secretary General of ASEAN and the P5 to identify a way forward on the protocol to the Bangkok Treaty.

Mr. President,

In closing, allow me to briefly touch upon the way forward in the CD on this issue. In the view of the Netherlands, the discussions in Subsidiary Body 4 demonstrated the need for further exploratory work in the

Conference on Disarmament. Therefore, the Netherlands supports the continuation of substantive work on NSAs with a view to reaching a sufficient level of common understanding to launch negotiations in the CD.

Thank you.