STATEMENT BY

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On the occasion of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, First Committee,

Thematic Debate: Disarmament Machinery

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Mr. Chairman,

In order to be able to deal in a resolute and coherent way with the global security challenges and with the growing public and political interest in disarmament the international community is facing today a well-functioning disarmament machinery is required. The current paralysis of some parts of the disarmament machinery is of great concern to the Netherlands and we continue to press for its revitalization and new initiatives.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) saw some encouraging developments during its 2014 session with good and thorough discussions under the Schedule of Activities on all core issues and in the Informal Working Group on possibilities for a Programme of Work. We also considered the suggestions of the Acting Secretary-General of the CD regarding the possibility of negotiating framework agreements as a positive contribution.

Unfortunately it proved yet again not possible to agree on the start of negotiations and the stalemate therefore regrettably continues, we think however that continuation of the work of the Informal Working Group can be useful.

We do hope however that the CD can further build further on this positive momentum in its 2015 session. Together with the other P6 members of the 2015 session, the Netherlands is currently exploring options to that effect.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) has concluded another triennial cycle without agreeing to substantive recommendations. Against this background, we support the consideration given to the working methods of the UNDC. We underline the need for UNDC to have a more focused and results oriented discussion on the agenda items, and we fully support the efforts of the Croatian chair in this regard.

For both the CD and UNDC, we are of the opinion that these fora would benefit from contributions of civil society. We think it is useful to have special meetings of both fora with participation of NGO’s, scientists and other experts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

With regard to the First Committee we are grateful for the progress so far and the professional guidance by you Mr. Chair.

Concerning the effective functioning of the First Committee we have two remarks mainly related to the way we deal with draft resolutions.

- This session, we received quite a number of draft resolutions rather late, just before the deadline or even on the day of the deadline. Due to this, time and possibility to discuss those texts before the first print comes out is limited. There is always a possibility of bringing out a revised one, but we all know that usually limits the possibilities for consultations. For that reason, this delegation would plead for an earlier presentation of the draft texts in order to make timely consultations possible. This would enhance transparency and the quality of our work here.
We appreciated the introduction by the High Representative on October 15 on the follow-up to resolutions through reporting. Although this is not new, we think that the fact that 95% of all member states – often including co-sponsors – do not provide their views in the requested reports is not acceptable. We therefore think we should take this into account. In our future work and resolutions, we would ask the Bureau to consult with different groups on this issue and make proposals to avoid unnecessary requests in the future.

Revitalization of the disarmament machinery is also an important topic on the agenda of the General Assembly. At its 66th session, the Netherlands together with Switzerland and South-Africa tabled a resolution on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. Its aim was to unite all UN-member states on the need to revitalize the work of the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament and to take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. The resolution was adopted by consensus by this Committee and subsequently the General Assembly as resolution 66/66.

This year, like in the last two sessions of the First Committee the authors of the resolution 66/66 elected to introduce a decision to include this item on the agenda of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly First Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding some encouraging developments, it is clear that much more remains to be done to revitalize the work of the CD and the UN disarmament machinery. We will continue to advocate for progress towards this end and stand ready to engage with all delegations on revisiting the implementation of resolution 66/66 next year.