Verification is an essential element of nuclear disarmament. NPT state parties, for example, have committed themselves to “the further development of the verification capabilities that will be required to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world” under the Thirteen Steps towards the implementation of Article VI NPT. The reason for this is that states will not proceed beyond certain limits with the nuclear disarmament process unless they have adequate reassurance that once they enter into a disarmament agreement, potential breaches of that agreement by other parties can be detected and addressed. At the same time, history reflects that verification often forms the most difficult part of nuclear arms control negotiations, as it did in the case of the NPT. The unprecedented and extremely complicated nature of nuclear disarmament verification (NDV) ensures that the creation of such a mechanism could take many years. That means that work on NDV must not be delayed. Cooperative processes on NDV furthermore help build confidence between the parties involved, as they establish working relations between officials, experts or military personnel.

For these reasons, NDV is a priority for the Netherlands. The Netherlands supports the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) and the UNGA NDV resolution (71/67). This includes active participation in these initiatives, including as co-chair of the working group on monitoring and verification objectives of the IPNDV and as co-sponsor of resolution 71/67.

The importance of NDV is manifest throughout different phases of nuclear disarmament, from reductions to the complete global elimination of nuclear weapons. The Netherlands has been developing different categories of disarmament scenarios (see Annex), along with our IPNDV partners, as the context of disarmament verification will significantly influence its requirements and objectives. At the same time the Netherlands is working through IPNDV to develop verification principles that should apply independent of external circumstances.

A GGE should focus on the development of NDV-mechanisms rather than strengthening them, as such measures currently do not exist. That being said, useful progress on these matters is being made in existing NDV-initiatives such as the IPNDV. The GGE should therefore ensure that its work is of added value rather than that it repeats work that has been done already. It should focus on scenarios that involve reaching and maintaining Global Zero.

The GGE should discuss the complications that arise when verifying nuclear disarmament. NDV involves verifying the dismantlement of warheads, as well as verification of numbers of deployed and stored warheads. There is little to no existing experience in doing so. Non-proliferation and security-related concerns must be satisfied before any verification mechanism could be considered viable. In addition, the GGE must look at matters related to the effectiveness and efficiency of any such mechanism.

Although NDV is different from existing verification measures, the GGE should still examine the relationship between a future NDV mechanism and the current IAEA safeguards system and the CTBTO IMS; in addition, other possible future measures – such as an FMCT – should be considered in this context. Moreover, although different parameters apply to NDV as to such existing mechanisms, these differences may be expected to subside as progress is made towards Global Zero. The end state may be an integrated regime with the same verification burden applying to all states.

**Annex: Four Categories**

1) **Reduction in nuclear weapon numbers**, including dismantlement of warheads from a deployment site to material disposition (while not all these steps may be relevant for all future scenarios, we should provide verification options for each of the 14 steps). This would not consider stockpile numbers as a whole only those weapons or weapon components to be dismantled or destroyed.

2) **Limitations on nuclear weapon numbers**, possibly including limitations by type or category of weapon. This should consider the merits of, and if beneficial, how to undertake verification of separate limits on deployed (or possibly other status classifications) and total numbers, with the item of account being weapons not delivery vehicles.
3) Reaching global zero. While this will include many of the elements from 1) and 2), there could be significant differences in what inspectors may have access to when no ongoing weapons maintenance programme should exist. Additional sites could be for example: R&D facilities for nuclear relevant work, the production or storage of weapon-relevant material or maintenance facilities.

4) Maintaining global zero. While here the nuclear weapons may have been eliminated, much infrastructure will initially remain potentially containing proliferation sensitive information. This option should look at what would need to be verified in NWS beyond conventional safeguards, and if or when former NWS can be verified as NNWS, or indeed if extra verification measures beyond current safeguards would be required in all States.