



Netherlands Statement
under General Exchange of Views,
Meeting of the High Contracting Parties,
Geneva, 21-23 November 2018
by H.E. Robbert-Jan Gabriëse
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
to the Conference on Disarmament

Mister Chair,

Please allow me first to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Meeting. We are very pleased to cooperate with you and you can count on the full support of my delegation.

In addition to the statement by the European Union the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity focusing on 1) the financial situation of the Convention, 2) Mines other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) and 3) Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).

Mister Chair,

Firstly, on the **financial situation of the Convention**: over the past few years, we saw multiple Geneva-based Conventions, including this one, facing financial difficulties. This meant the cancellation of important meetings in a time when international cooperation on the many challenges we face is crucial. It also meant the termination of the contract of the ISU staff members, because we could not guarantee the payment of their salaries, while the ISU plays an important role in the implementation of the Convention. We regret this. The most pertinent reason for these financial difficulties are the outstanding arrears and late payment of contributions. Therefore, the contribution process and practices need to be improved.

We welcome the financial measures adopted at last year's meeting and call for their full and swift implementation. We also fully support the presidency's efforts in proposing additional measures to improve the convention's finances in a more sustainable way. The

status quo is not an option. As much as these measures may help to stabilise the Convention's finances, ultimately, the most important matter is that States pay their contribution in time, well in advance of the meetings. We will keep on urging States to do so, so we can talk 'substance' rather than finances.

Secondly, on **MOTAPM**: the Netherlands is in favour of continuing our discussions on this issue. We are all aware of the humanitarian impact and the consequences on development that are the result of indiscriminate and disproportionate use of these weapons. We also stress, however, the need for a balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations. MOTAPM can be used legitimately if used in accordance with international humanitarian law and if appropriate safeguards for protection of civilians are in place.

And finally, on **LAWS**:

We welcome the progress made in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, in particular through the adoption of the Guiding Principles. The report of the GGE provides a good basis for further structured discussions on this multifaceted and complex topic. Increased autonomy in weapons systems could lead to humanitarian benefits, but there are also risks. To continue to make progress we need to increase our shared understanding through further discussions under the CCW. The Netherlands therefore supports the continuation of the work of the GGE under the current mandate in 2019 for 10 days.

Mister Chair,

Let me conclude by reminding that in the spirit of the CCW, we aim to prevent excessive injuries and indiscriminate effects. We seek to lower the number of civilian casualties; a task that remains crucial in a time where densely populated areas have increasingly become areas of conflict.

These are our common goals, and we look forward to contributing our part in these efforts.

Thank you