



Resolution 67/49

Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms

Kingdom of the Netherlands

2013

Introduction

The Netherlands attaches great value to disarmament and arms control as means to contribute to international peace and security. Confidence-building measures (CBMs) are deemed essential in this process, for they are important in reinforcing the norm against the spread of conventional weapons and in reducing tensions between states. CBMs provide transparency, dialogue and cooperation and therefore create a climate conducive to effective disarmament and arms control.

With regards to confidence and transparency in the field of conventional arms in Europe, the Netherlands is a member of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Part of the OSCE is the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), established in 1992. This is an autonomous decision-making body, subservient only to the OSCE Ministerial Council. Since its creation, the Forum has agreed on a number of documents and decisions on arms control, disarmament and Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs).

The existing CSBM-regime now constitutes of interlocking exchanges of obligatory and verifiable notifications on military holdings and activities, and armed force levels. The CSBM regime contributes to greater transparency, and thus promotes trust and confidence among participating States. The Netherlands has fully implemented a great number OSCE codes and principles, and adheres to the various regimes of information exchange.

I. A selection of Dutch participation in treaties and agreements with regards to confidence building measures and related activities

a. Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

Adopted on 19 November, 1990

The Netherlands is party to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The CFE Treaty places national and territorial ceilings on conventional weapons, in order to prevent any country from amassing a significant asymmetrical stockpile of weapons and to eliminate the capacity for conducting surprise attacks and initiating large-scale offensive operations.

The CFE contributes to greater transparency in the field on conventional arms, since it requires state-parties to permit inspections of 20 % of their 'objects of verification'. The inspection regime provides state-parties with the opportunities to verify compliance with the treaty's provisions. In addition, the CFE treaty increases transparency by requiring state-parties to submit extensive annual information on their military organization and equipment holdings of military units and locations as well as intermittent updating notifications.

b. Vienna Document 2011

Adopted 30 November 2011

The Netherlands is a signatory of the Vienna Document. This document aims to strengthen mutual trust and to dispel concern about military activities of the participating states, which pledge to refrain from the threat or use of force, by encouraging openness and transparency. To this end, the Vienna Document sets out mechanisms for consultation and cooperation and provisions regarding the exchange and verification of information on the signatory states' armed forces, their defense policies and military activities.

c. Treaty on Open Skies

Entered into force on 1 January, 2002

The Netherlands is a party to the Treaty on Open Skies. This treaty sets out a framework for a regime of unarmed observation flights over the territory of participating states. In the treaty, states-parties reiterate their commitment "to promoting greater openness and transparency in their military activities and to enhancing security by means of confidence- and security-building measures". The Netherlands considers this treaty an important document in the process of enhancing security and confidence between members of the international community.

d. UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Ratified on 16 June 1987

The Netherlands ratified and implemented the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all its five Protocols. The purpose of the CCW is to ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary or superfluous suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately. The Netherlands annually submits its report on the Amended Protocol II and Protocol V of the CCW.

e. UN Register of Conventional Arms

Established on 1 January, 1992

The Netherlands attaches great value to the UN Register of Conventional Arms as a means to foster regional and international confidence-building, and thus tables the two-yearly resolution 'Transparency in Armaments' which requests states to report annually to the Register. The Netherlands annually submits to the Register a national report on international arms transfers, including data on procurement through national production, military holdings and small arms and light weapons transfers. The database of the Register contributes to transparency and builds confidence among member states, by capturing the bulk of the global arms trade in the categories of conventional weapons covered by it.

f. UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Netherlands annually submits reports on the implementation of the UN PoA, and of the International Tracing Instrument. Furthermore the Netherlands assists several developing countries, among others Burundi, with their SALW policy under the banner of the PoA.

g. UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures

First reported in 1983

The UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures (MILEX) is a transparency tool that helps building confidence and promotes restraint through greater openness. The Netherlands annually submits reports according to the Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures.

h. OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security

Adopted on 3 December, 1994

The Netherlands attaches great value to the Code of Conduct and has fully implemented it. The Netherlands regularly takes part in the information exchange on the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

i. OSCE Global Exchange of Military Information

Adopted on 28 November, 1994

The Netherlands regularly takes part in the information exchange on military information and submits yearly reports when requested by the OSCE.

j. OSCE Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Landmines

The Netherlands annually submits the questionnaire on anti-personnel landmines since 1998.

k. OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Adopted on 24 November 2000

The Netherlands annually informs the OSCE about Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) issues - including import and export, national stockpile management and security procedures, confiscation, seizure and collection, marking and tracing systems, current legislation regarding export and brokering, and techniques and procedures for the destruction of SALW.

l. OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition

Adopted on 19 November, 2003

The Netherlands regularly reports and contributes to OSCE projects in this field.

m. OSCE Documents on Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers

Adopted 25 November, 1993

Information exchange on conventional arms transfers and questionnaire on conventional arms transfers: The Netherlands submits reports on a regular basis. The Netherlands abides by the principles laid down in this document.

n. Convention on the Prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production, transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction (Ottawa Convention)

Ratified on 12 April, 1999

The Netherlands was an early supporter of a comprehensive ban on antipersonnel mines and part of the core group of countries leading the Ottawa Process. In December 1996, the Government banned possession and use of antipersonnel mines, with broad parliamentary approval, following a Ministry of Defense reassessment. In 2002, the Netherlands finished the destruction of its stockpile of antipersonnel mines. However, in accordance with the Ottawa Convention, the Netherlands retains a limited number of antipersonnel mines for training purposes. The Netherlands is a substantial financial contributor to mine action projects in various affected countries. The Netherlands annually submits transparency reports according to Article 7 of the Convention. This includes the Voluntary Form J, which reports on Dutch funding for mine action.

o. Convention on Cluster Munitions (Oslo Convention)

Ratified on 23 February, 2011

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) prohibits all use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retaining and transfer of cluster munitions. Separate articles in the Convention concern assistance to victims, clearance of contaminated areas and destruction of stockpiles. The Netherlands signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 3 December 2008 and ratified it on 23 February 2011. For the Netherlands the Convention entered into force on 1 August 2011. The Netherlands has finished the destruction of its stockpiles of cluster munitions in 2012.