



## Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms (Resolution 63/57)

### National contribution to the database on confidence- building measures Kingdom of the Netherlands 2009

#### 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.

#### I. Dutch participation in treaties and agreements with regard to confidence-building measures

##### **a. Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces (CFE)**

The Netherlands is party to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The CFE treaty places national and territorial ceilings on conventional weapon systems, 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. By February 2008, CFE states-parties had carried out more than 4,000 on-site inspections. In addition, the CFE treaty increases transparency by requiring state-parties to submit annual reports on the actual location of tanks, ACVs and artillery if they are different from their designated peacetime location. Also, quarterly reports must detail the actual location of tanks, ACVs and artillery, as well as the total number of combat aircraft and attack helicopters in the entire treaty area. Changes of more than 30 tanks, ACVs or 10 artillery on a state's territory must be reported. Any increase by 18 or more combat aircraft or attack helicopters in a country's holding in the entire treaty area must be notified to all state-parties.

#### **b. Vienna Document**

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 defence policies and military activities.

#### **c. Treaty on Open Skies**

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, state-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**

The Netherlands ratified and implemented the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its 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 unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately.

Article 13 of Amended Protocol II of the CCW contributes to transparency and confidence between state-parties by providing for conference of High Contracting Parties to the Protocol to be held annually for the purpose of consultations and cooperation on all issues relating to the Protocol. In addition, state-parties submit annual reports according that can be retrieved in a online database. The Netherlands' annual report of 2007 can be found on the following website: [www.unog.ch](http://www.unog.ch)

#### **e. UN Register of Conventional Arms**

The Netherlands attaches great value to the UN Register of Conventional arms as a means to foster regional and international confidence-building. 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 great bulk of the global arms trade in the categories of conventional weapons covered by it. Thus far, a total of 172 States have reported to the Register one or more times. The annual reports submitted by the Netherlands can be found on the following website:

[http://disarmament.un.org/UN\\_REGISTER.NSF](http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.NSF)

**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. The Netherlands' report of 2008 can be found on the following website: [www.un.org/disarmament](http://www.un.org/disarmament)

**g. UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures (UNGA Resolution 60/44)**

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. The consolidated reports of the Secretary General contain the data submitted by the Netherlands and can be found on the following website: [www.un.org/disarmament](http://www.un.org/disarmament)

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

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

**i. OSCE Global Exchange of Military Information**

The Netherlands is regularly taking 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.

**k. OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons**

The Netherlands yearly informs the OSCE about import and export, surpluses and amount of destruction SALW, national stockpile management and security procedures, marking systems, current legislation regarding export and brokering, and techniques and procedures for the destruction of SALW. In addition, the Netherlands has submitted information regarding national legislation on brokering for the OSCE CBM titled *Principles on the control of Brokering in SALW*. The Netherlands is regularly contributing to OSCE projects in the field of SALW.

**l. OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition**

The Netherlands is regularly reporting and contributing to OSCE projects in this field.

**m. OSCE Document on Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers**

*Information exchange on conventional arms transfers* and the *Questionnaire on conventional arms transfers*: The Netherlands submits reports on a regular basis. The Netherlands abides by the principles laid down in this document, since Dutch arms transfer policy is based on more comprehensive European Union policy.

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

The Netherlands was an early supporter of a comprehensive ban on antipersonnel mines and one 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. The Netherlands started to destroy its stockpile of 264,500 antipersonnel mines and is contributing financially to mine action projects in various affected countries. The Netherlands regularly submits annual transparency reports according to Article 7 of the Convention. This includes the Voluntary Form J, which gives details of Dutch funding of mine action.

I. Dutch confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms

The Netherlands has contributed to the following events in the field of confidence-building in 2008:

- The Netherlands contributes financially to overhauling the Register, in order to ensure easy and reliable access to information submitted to it by member states and to allow for a dynamic search function that would allow users to quickly and comprehensively search for information provided in the UN Register. The Netherlands is also actively involved in regional initiatives, such as regional UN workshops on transparency in armaments, with the aim to enhance awareness and participation of UN Member States to the Register. In addition, the Netherlands contributes to the development of a framework for an international standard of end-user certification for conventional arms trade.
- The Netherlands supports the ongoing efforts in light of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. The Netherlands is a member of the Geneva Declaration Core Group in which the implementation of the declaration, as well as a concrete action plan is further being developed. Furthermore, the Netherlands has funded the Regional Conference for Eastern and Southern Eastern countries on Armed Violence and Development in Sarajevo last year.