PUBLIC STATEMENT FROM THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE MISSILE TECHNOLOGY CONTROL REGIME (MTCR), ROTTERDAM, 9th OCTOBER 2015

The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) held its 29th Plenary week in Rotterdam from 5th to 9th October 2015. Foreign Ministers Asselborn and Koenders welcomed participants at the opening of the meeting. Ambassador Piet de Klerk chaired the meeting. He will remain the Chair of the MTCR on behalf of the Netherlands and Luxembourg until the next Plenary Meeting scheduled for 2016.

The main purpose of the Plenary Meeting was to review and evaluate the MTCR's activities over the last 12 months and to intensify the efforts of MTCR Partners to prevent the proliferation of unmanned delivery systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

MTCR Partners recalled that the proliferation of WMD (nuclear, chemical and biological weapons) and their means of delivery remains a threat to international peace and security, as recognised in UN Security Council Resolution 1540. They reiterated their commitment to limit the risks of proliferation by controlling international transfers that can contribute to delivery systems for WMD. They held a thorough exchange of information on missile proliferation developments since their last Plenary Meeting in Oslo.

Partners welcomed that the MTCR Guidelines and control lists in the Annex constitute an international best practices benchmark for controlling exports of missile-related items and technologies, and noted that these standards are increasingly adhered to by non-partners and are included in some UN Security Council resolutions.

Partners called on all states to exercise extreme vigilance to prevent the transfer of goods and technology which could contribute to WMD missile programmes, in accordance with their national legislation and consistent with international law. They confirmed their commitment to inform and assist interested parties that are supportive of the MTCR's objectives and purposes.

In the interest of regional and international security, MTCR Partners appealed to all states to support the non-proliferation aims of the Regime by observing its Guidelines, and by establishing appropriate national legislation and law enforcement mechanisms. Partners emphasised that observance of the MTCR Guidelines by as many states as possible will contribute substantially to limiting the risks of proliferation of delivery systems for WMD and to fostering international security. Partners welcomed the fact that Estonia and Latvia have declared, in the past year, their adherence to the MTCR Guidelines as a basis for their national export controls concerning missile technology. Partners invited other states to also declare, on a voluntary basis, adherence to the MTCR Guidelines and formally notify the MTCR Point of Contact in writing of their political commitment to control all of the items on the MTCR Annex according to the MTCR Guidelines, including any subsequent changes to the Annex/Guidelines.

Partners underlined that the MTCR Guidelines are not designed to impede technological advancement and development, including space programmes, as long as such activities could not contribute to delivery systems for WMD.

Partners also encouraged relevant regional bodies and institutions to give attention to the role of export controls in preventing the proliferation of missiles capable of carrying WMD.

Partners expressed appreciation for the outreach activities conducted by the outgoing MTCR Chairman Ambassador Roald Naess of Norway. The new MTCR Chair was encouraged to follow up and conduct further outreach activities and contacts in order to increase transparency about the Regime, to promote its objectives and to maintain the momentum of dialogue with the visited countries. MTCR partners also encouraged the continuation of individual, collective and regional efforts to assist non-partner states and other interested parties in implementing missile-related export controls as required under UNSCR 1540, and to inform the Chair about these activities.

Within the framework of the MTCR mandate, MTCR Partners conducted extensive discussions on various country issues including DPRK and Iran. With regard to the former, Partners confirmed their commitment to implement UN Security Council resolutions 1695, 1718, 1874, 2087 and 2094. With regard to the latter, they confirmed their commitment to implement UN Security Council resolutions 1696, 1737, 1747, 1803, 1835, 1929 and 2224. Partners highlighted the importance of the implementation of these resolutions. Partners expressed concerns associated with global missile proliferation activities in particular regarding ongoing missile programmes in the Middle East, Northeast Asia, and South Asia, which might fuel missile proliferation activities elsewhere. Partners agreed to continue exchanging views on missile programme developments.

Partners welcomed the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2231 which endorses the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action elaborated by China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union and Iran, and noted its effect on the existing resolutions.

Partners reaffirmed the critical importance of the MTCR's on-going technical work. They underlined that the rapid technological development and changes in proliferant procurement practices related to sensitive items and technologies continues to require great awareness and effective actions to address these developments. They recognised that the Equipment, Software, and Technology Annex is a cornerstone of the work done by the MTCR to prevent missile proliferation and expressed deep appreciation for the accomplishments of the MTCR's Technical Experts Meeting (TEM).

They also expressed their deep appreciation for the work of the MTCR's Licensing and Enforcement Experts Meeting (LEEM), and the Information Exchange Meeting (IEM). In the IEM and LEEM, Partners continued discussions on a number of issues, including proliferation trends, procurement activities and strategies in support of programmes for WMD delivery means; serious risks and challenges posed by intangible technology transfers (ITT); key technology trends in missile programmes; catch-all controls for non-listed items; and brokering, transit and transhipment issues and on efforts to exploit them to evade export controls. These discussions showed that constant awareness; information sharing, including on best practices; and updating of MTCR countries export control systems and enforcement efforts is of great importance and has a significant impact on their work aimed at curbing proliferation of WMD means of delivery.

Partners exchanged views on issues relating to future membership. Individual applications for membership were thoroughly discussed. The membership issue will continue to be on the agenda.

Partners reviewed a number of issues relating to the internal operation of the MTCR, including the continuity and effectiveness of its Chairmanship. They warmly welcomed and approved the offer of a MTCR Chairmanship by the Republic of Korea in 2016-2017.

The MTCR has 34 members: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.