

Political Declaration: Conference “2019. Capturing Technology. Rethinking Arms Control”,
Berlin, 15 March 2019

We, the Foreign Ministers of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Sweden have convened here in Berlin today to refocus global attention on the crucial role of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in securing peace and stability in our times and for future generations.

We are deeply worried about the deterioration of the global security environment and the manifold challenges to stability including through the erosion of existing conventional and nuclear disarmament and arms control regimes. We are especially concerned about the future of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which has been crucial for security in Europe for over thirty years. We reiterate our urgent call to Russia to return to complete and verifiable compliance with this treaty before August to enable its preservation.

At today’s conference, we wish to highlight in particular that global security and stability are being challenged by the changing character of warfare, in part enabled by the availability and development of new technologies.

While the rapid speed of technological development in the fields of artificial intelligence, life sciences and digital technology – to name just a few – is creating multifold opportunities for global progress, new technologies may also enable the development of new military applications and capabilities. It is of the utmost importance that the production, use and transfer of these types of weapons are firmly grounded in International Law and state-control.

New types of warfare imply the need to adapt the future arms control and non-proliferation architecture. They also raise questions with regard to their conformity with international law and current ethical standards, as well as with the required level of human control.

Against this background, we affirm the following:

- We will work together to strengthen existing biological, chemical, conventional and nuclear arms control arrangements in a multilateral endeavour to maintain and reinforce the rules-based international order for a new technological age.
- The time to act is now. Given the speed of technological developments, it is of utmost importance that we now analyse closely potential negative and positive effects of new technologies, and identify the need for further regulation and new arms control arrangements in order to maintain international peace and stability.
- There is a need to build a shared understanding of how technologically enhanced military capabilities may change the character of warfare and how this will influence global security.
- We need to intensify cooperation to prevent the uncontrolled proliferation of weapon systems, both existing and new.
- The development and use of all weapons needs to be in full compliance with existing international law.
- We need an intensified dialogue with and among the representatives of science, research and industry to encourage the development of ethical standards for the development of new technologies.