Speech by Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle to open the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) meeting

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Ladies and gentlemen,

let me welcome you all very warmly to the Federal Foreign Office for this year’s Plenary Meeting of the Missile Technology Control Regime.

At this meeting, I’m pleased to say, Germany is about to take over the MTCR Chair. We do this with great pleasure because Germany wants to contribute to our common efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation.

Dear Maria del Carmen Squeff,

Thanks to the splendid work of your government it is easy for us to take over the baton.

Ladies and gentlemen,

in today’s world we face global challenges that no country can address effectively on its own. In times of globalization a lack of security in one country has the potential to pose a risk to all of us. That is why preventive security policy becomes more and more important.

A strong non-proliferation regime is one pillar of our common preventive security policy.

Right from the start Germany has been a strong supporter of the MTCR and the other export control regimes, namely the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement.

Germany is taking responsibility for combating the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. For some years, the German Government has organized the series of Berlin Export Control Seminars. The last one taking place here in June.

We support initiatives like the Proliferation Security Initiative – PSI – and hosted its Operational Experts Meeting here last November. Only if the international community cooperates closely in the field of non-proliferation, will we be able to strengthen our common security.

This year the Missile Technology Control Regime is 25 years old.

And it has been a success story. When the MTCR was established in 1987, the regime counted 7 member countries. Today we have 34. Its scope was originally limited to the delivery of systems for nuclear weapons.

Today, it covers all kinds of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The Regime has played a major part in slowing down and disrupting dangerous missile technology programs.

The MTCR has become the core multilateral forum for combating the proliferation of ballistic and cruise missiles as well as unmanned aerial vehicles. It represents the gold standard, so to speak.

Together we have reached a great deal, but there is more work to be done. We all know that the dangers of proliferation are real. Just read the newspapers. That is why we must not reduce our common efforts to combat them.

The most obvious current example is the Iranian nuclear programme. Nearly ten years have passed and Iran has still not managed to allay suspicions that its nuclear programme may serve military purposes. Its huge missile programme, the largest in the region, compounds these suspicions.

We want to see a diplomatic solution to this issue, but we won't allow Iran to play for time.

That's why in the

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we've agreed a further round of very tough sanctions designed to persuade Iran to at last engage in serious negotiations with the E3+3.

Another cause for concern are North Korea's continuing nuclear and missile programs, which threaten security and stability not only on the Korean Peninsula. It's vital to put a definite stop to proliferation flows from and to North Korea. With the

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sanctions now in place and the export control regimes, I believe we can make an important contribution.

Also, we remain deeply concerned about the continuing activities related to Weapons of Mass Destruction and missile technology of President Al-Assad's regime in Syria. We must join our efforts to bring the conflict in Syria to an end.

It is also important that we respond to new technologies and that we extend the reach of the Regime.

Advanced delivery systems and new technologies such as lighter-than-air vehicles pose new questions for the MTCR. Questions to which we have to find answers.

Important technology supplier states that are not yet in this group are knocking at the door, for example India. Even now not all

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member states have joined us around this table. To my mind this is something that's long overdue.

Our efforts must also include encouraging more countries to sign up to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

This brings me to my final point. A preventive security policy also requires progress on nuclear disarmament. Proliferation prevention and disarmament are two sides of the same coin.

This connection is established very clearly in the Non Proliferation Treaty of 1968. Today, the world still faces the threat of nuclear weapons. We must not lose sight of our vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. The Missile Technology Control Regime is an important contribution to this vision of "Global Zero".

Successful disarmament and non-proliferation requires stamina and an unshakeable commitment to hard work. Also in future Germany will be a bold and strong champion of such efforts. We don't want proliferating weapons of mass destruction to become the scourge of globalization.

Only if we ultimately ban these weapons we can be sure that we have banned the risk of their proliferation.

Thank you for your important work.

I wish all of us a productive Plenary Meeting and successful MTCR cooperation over the years to come.

Thank you very much.

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