

## **Nordic Statement 29.9.2022**

### **UNGA 77 First Committee – General debate**

Mr Chair,

It is an honour to address this Committee on the behalf of the Nordic countries, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

In 2022, global and European security environment changed dramatically. The Russian Federation has invaded another sovereign country, Ukraine. It has used a wide range of conventional weapons – often contrary to International Humanitarian Law. It has furthermore engaged into dangerous and completely unacceptable nuclear rhetoric and has repeatedly threatened the use of nuclear weapons.

The Nordic countries condemn in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked and unjustifiable aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The invasion constitutes a grave violation of international law, including the UN Charter. It severely undermines European and global security and stability. We strongly condemn the illegal, sham referenda, and the subsequent illegal annexation by Russia of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaportizhzhia and Kherson regions. The Russian aggression furthermore violates the security guaranties given to Ukraine in the Budapest Memorandum. This was a guarantee linked to Ukraine renouncing nuclear weapons on its territory and joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapons state.

The Nordic countries condemn all breaches of international humanitarian law. Russia must be held accountable for its Human Rights violations and

violations of International Humanitarian Law. We equally condemn Belarus for its role in the Russian aggression.

The arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and bilateral and multilateral cooperation has been severely affected by this behaviour.

**We deeply regret that Russia alone chose to block a consensus final document of the 10<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in August.** The Nordic countries were strongly engaged in seeking a successful outcome of the conference by engaging in initiatives such as the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the IPNDV. We were encouraged by the level of common ground achieved on several divisive issues and the strong commitment to the Treaty demonstrated by the State parties. We are looking forward to the next review cycle and will seek to further strengthen the NPT. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, with the ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear nuclear weapons and an important element for future peaceful use and development of nuclear energy.

**The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty** is an integral part of the nuclear disarmament architecture. We strongly urge states outside the treaty, in particular the remaining Annex II states, to sign and ratify the treaty guaranteeing a legally binding ban on nuclear testing. We urge all States, to abide by a moratorium on nuclear test explosions and any other nuclear explosions.

We also reaffirm our support for early negotiation and conclusion of a **Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty**. Pending a future FMCT in force, we urge

all states that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The Nordic countries pledge their full and continued support for the work of the **International Atomic Energy Agency. The IAEA is** crucial in underpinning the implementation of the NPT through its safeguards system. A Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with an Additional Protocol is the international verification standard,

The Nordic countries continue to fully support the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.** We are increasingly concerned about Iran's continued breaches of its nuclear-related commitments. We urge Iran to return to full compliance with the agreement and to address outstanding safeguards issues without delay. We call on Iran to return to negotiations in Vienna without further delay.

The DPRK's unlawful launches of ballistic missiles this year threaten international and regional peace and security. The UN Security Council should address this appropriately. The Nordic countries are deeply concerned that the DPRK *continues the development of its nuclear weapons programme,* that it is prepared to engage in *first use of nuclear weapons* and that it *rules out negotiations* on abiding by its obligations. We urge the DPRK to abandon its nuclear and ballistic programmes and re-commit to meaningful negotiations. The complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the DPRK in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions is the only way to sustainable peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK cannot obtain the status of a nuclear weapon state in accordance with the NPT.

Mr. Chair

The re-emergence of chemical weapons is an urgent threat to international peace and security and must be dealt with firmly and collectively. The erosion of norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction has affected the **Chemical Weapons Convention**.

Any use of chemical weapons, under any circumstances, is a clear breach of international law and the Chemical Weapons convention and can amount to the most serious crimes of international concern including war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Impunity for breaches of the global prohibition of chemical weapons cannot be tolerated. Holding those responsible to account will be facilitated by the ability of the OPCW to identify perpetrators of such heinous crimes. We underline our full and unequivocal confidence in the objectivity, impartiality, independence and technical expertise of the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

The **Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention** is a vital pillar of the disarmament regime. With a view to the upcoming review conference this year and the global pandemic, it is timely to recommit to this important treaty and constructively attend to its implementation.

The Nordic countries strongly supports the **UN Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons**, which is the only independent international instrument for investigating alleged use of biological weapons.

Mr. Chair,

Weapons of mass destruction tends to dominate the disarmament dialogue and for valid reasons. However, there are other important disarmament and arms control issues on the agenda in this distinguished committee.

The Nordic countries are committed to the **Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention**. The strong and ambitious Oslo action plan from 2019, and the road map, needs to be implemented with firm determination in order to achieve a mine free world by 2025. We urge other participating states to join us in that effort and hope that more states sign up to this successful treaties that contributes so much to the humanitarian cause.

We call on all UN Member states to join the **Arms Trade Treaty**. The major arms exporters, importers and transit countries carry special responsibilities in this regard. Transparency and information sharing are of utmost importance in reducing the risk of diversion. In order to achieve effective treaty implementation it is essential to pay attention to the risks of serious acts of gender-based violence.

The illicit flows of **small arms and light weapons** constitute a key challenge to international peace, security and development. The Nordic countries support instruments addressing this important issue, including The UN Programme of Action and the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament.

The Nordic countries appreciates the substantive work over the past years of the **Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)**. We consider the Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons the best-suited forum to discuss issues regarding emerging technologies in this area. It will be important to advance work on applicable principles and norms, especially in order to ensure meaningful human

control and accountability for decisions over the use of force in the coming years. We are committed to pursuing an outcome that reinforces the necessity of compliance with international law, in particular International Humanitarian Law.

The Nordic countries are firmly committed to the prevention of an arms race in **outer space**. We regard outer space as a common good for the benefit of all. Strengthened multilateral cooperation is needed to preserve and enhance the safety, security and sustainability in outer space activities. To this end, we welcome and support the work of the Open Ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviour and the work of the Open-Ended Working Group. We welcome commitments by States not to conduct destructive direct ascent anti-satellite missile tests (ASAT).

A globally accessible, free, open and secure **cyberspace** is now, more than ever, fundamental to how the world operates. The Nordic countries are committed to promoting the full application of existing international law in cyberspace. We welcome efforts to support the practical implementation of the UN framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace by establishing a Programme of Action.

The Nordic countries welcome the conclusion of the **Process on strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA)**. The declaration is a positive outcome at a time when the international security environment is under extreme pressure.

Last but not least let me turn to an issue that ought to come effortlessly and should be mainstreamed into our work, procedures and substance, and that

is **gender**. Gender aspects across the board and the empowerment of and full inclusion of women into our substantive work should be the order of the day.

Mr. Chair

The Nordic countries will make every effort to contribute constructively to the important work of the First Committee and beyond.

Thank you.