



Government Offices of Sweden
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

STATEMENT

delivered by

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at the

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General Debate

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Mr President, dear colleagues,

Sweden associates itself with the statements of the European Union and Denmark on behalf of the Nordic countries. My remarks are made in a national capacity.

We meet here in New York against the backdrop of a severely deteriorated security environment. Sweden condemns in the strongest terms Russia's brutal and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Russia's aggression and its threats to use nuclear weapons – which risks lowering the threshold of such use - are flagrant violations of international law, including the UN Charter. These actions stand in sharp contrast to the 3 January 2022 declaration by the leaders of the five Nuclear Weapon States reaffirming the principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

Mr President,

Russia's actions, the continuing expansion and modernization of nuclear arsenals, challenges to well-established norms and principles, the lack of transparency and restraint all give cause for great concern. In addition, Sweden remains deeply worried about regional proliferation challenges, in particular Iran's proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities and lacking cooperation with the IAEA, and the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missiles program.

Multilateralism remains our best chance to address these challenges and realize the objectives of the NPT, including our common goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr President,

The Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament was launched by Sweden together with fifteen other Non-Nuclear Weapon States in 2019 to mobilize political support for concrete progress on disarmament.

The Stockholm Initiative has since developed 22 disarmament-related proposals - “stepping stones”. These include steps to reduce nuclear arsenals, reduce the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines and policies, proceed with negotiations on a treaty prohibiting fissile material production for nuclear weapons, support efforts to develop multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capacities and strengthen negative security assurances. Another crucial step would be the long overdue entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

In the current security context, efforts to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons use are more urgent than ever. While no substitute for disarmament, risk reduction can decrease tensions, increase trust and dispel misconceptions. The Nuclear Risk Reduction Package presented by the Stockholm Initiative puts forward concrete measures and a process for addressing risk reduction within the NPT framework.

If implemented, our proposals can contribute to make a real difference. I am proud to report that 24 state parties have aligned themselves with our working papers and I invite you to support our proposals.

Mr President,

The IAEA plays an indispensable role in the service of the NPT. We owe it to the Agency to provide it with the best possible inspection tools, including by universally applying the Additional Protocol, an integral part of the IAEA safeguards system under the NPT. Sweden supports the Agency’s broad technical cooperation with the Member States, including through the Peaceful Uses Initiative.

Diversity is crucial for disarmament and non-proliferation to work. As a Government with a Feminist Foreign Policy, Sweden believes that full and effective participation of women and a further integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation decision-making processes is key, as is engaging the younger generation.

Mr President,

This conference should result in the strengthening of the NPT and the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, from which we all benefit. It is my hope that we can find consensus and agree on a forward-looking agenda on some of the most pressing issues, with a view to adopting a final document of the conference. This is the time to show political leadership. We owe this to ourselves and to future generations.

Thank you!