

## **General statement by the Nordic countries**

### **Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference.**

**Second session, Geneva, 23<sup>rd</sup> April – 4<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

#### **Full version**

Mr. Chair,

1. I take the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country Sweden.
2. The preparatory process of the NPT 2020 Review Cycle takes place in a particularly difficult international security landscape. We are witnessing the use of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons are gaining more prominence in security doctrines. The entry into force of the CTBT remains elusive. The future of the crucial JCPOA is surrounded with question marks. Prospects for new nuclear arms control progress is discouraging. Developments with respect to the nuclear and missile programs of DPRK have alarmed us during the past year, even if recent developments offer a glimmer of hope.
3. In this challenging environment we have a joint responsibility to work hard to find common ground - to focus on what unites us rather than what divides us. Within the Nordic group, we share close cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation, notwithstanding our different security policy choices. Through history, we have learnt that sustainable security can only be attained through cooperation.

Mr. Chair,

4. The lack of gender equality has hampered the field of disarmament and non-proliferation for far too long. Including gender perspectives and pursuing equal gender representation is not only a question of rights and fairness, it is a matter of efficiency. Studies show that diverse teams are more effective, innovative and take more sustainable decisions. When looking to break the ongoing stalemate and trench-digging within disarmament and non-proliferation, improving gender aspects is not “soft policy” – it is smart policy.
  
5. In order to work together we do not have to agree on all issues. The fact that we are all State Parties to the NPT gives us a clear framework for our efforts. Efforts to pursue a world without nuclear weapons in line with Article VI, to close any possible proliferation loopholes, and to reaffirm the undisputable right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology, in a safe and secure way.
  
6. This Review Cycle should reaffirm the Article VI obligation - including the unequivocal undertaking by nuclear weapon states to eliminate their arsenals.
  
7. We, the Nordic countries, had different perspectives on the negotiations of the Prohibition Treaty. But we are united in our concern, “at the continued risk for humanity represented by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used and the catastrophic

humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of these weapons” – to quote the 2010 Final Document.

8. When nuclear weapons are being modernized and new delivery systems developed, the importance of a rules-based nuclear arms control system becomes vital. The fact that the INF Treaty is under severe pressure is deeply concerning. We call on the US and Russia to continue their diplomatic and technical efforts to address the serious concerns regarding Russia’s -compliance to ensure the preservation of this historic treaty. We consider the New START an historic achievement, and welcome that the agreed levels were met this February. We strongly encourage the US and Russia to extend the New START treaty, and seek further reductions covering strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed warheads.

9. In view of the increasing nuclear-related risks, a particular effort should be made to promote risk reduction and transparency measures in this review cycle. Diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in ways that promote international stability and security should be a step we can all agree and make progress on. We encourage collective action to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons and the risk of accidental use.

10. The Nordic countries are of the view, that non-nuclear weapon states that are committed to the NPT have a legitimate interest to receive

legally binding negative security assurances from nuclear weapon states. We are ready to engage in any effort to reach this goal already during the current review cycle. Progress in this area would contribute to global peace and security by building confidence among NPT states and signaling a reduced role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and policies.

11. Development of effective monitoring, verification and compliance mechanisms is a critical building block for the achievement of nuclear disarmament. The Nordic countries welcome and take active part in various initiatives in this field. The IPNDV brings together nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states to develop the necessary capabilities for verifiably dismantling nuclear weapons. The Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership further deepens the understanding of verification, not least regarding ways to manage the issue of proliferative information. In a few weeks the first meeting in the Group of Governmental Experts on disarmament verification will be held here in Geneva. The IAEA can contribute to nuclear disarmament verification in accordance with its Statute. Progress on nuclear disarmament verification would be an important deliverable to the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

12. The Nordic countries consider that it is urgent to negotiate and conclude an FMCT. A future FMCT could also identify ways to include a phased approach on the elimination of existing stocks. The high level FMCT expert preparatory group has our full support.

13. We attach great importance to the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons. We regret that it has not been possible to convene a conference for a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We reiterate the validity of previously adopted resolutions. Nuclear weapons free zones provide an avenue for legally binding negative security assurances.

Mr. Chair,

14. Despite not having entered into force, the CTBT has set a fundamental global norm, followed by all but one country. The treaty is essential to end all nuclear explosive testing, constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, and end the development of new types of nuclear weapons. We urge all states, especially annex II countries to sign and ratify this treaty without any further delay and call upon them to refrain from any action that can undermine the treaty.

15. The Nordic countries firmly condemn the nuclear and ballistic missile tests carried out by the DPRK. These constitute a flagrant violation of a series of UN Security Council resolutions and a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. In recent months, promising diplomatic processes have been set in motion. They give us renewed hope that progress is possible. Our objective must remain to have DPRK return to full and verifiable compliance with all its NPT obligations.

16. The JCPOA shows that it is possible to achieve consensus, even when the point of departure is difficult. The Nordic countries fully support the JCPOA and encourage all parties to live up to their commitments and obligations. We highly value the IAEA's role in monitoring and verifying the implementation of the JCPOA, and have provided also financial support for these activities. Sustained implementation of the agreement is necessary to maintain and strengthen the global non-proliferation regime.

17. A credible non-proliferation regime is a pre-condition to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear arms. From the perspective of the Nordic countries, the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with the Additional Protocol constitute the current verification standard. Only with an Additional Protocol in force, is the IAEA in a position to conclude that all declared and any undeclared nuclear activities in a given country are for peaceful purposes only. This is in the interest of our collective security, as well as each State party individually. Through the Additional Protocol, a State Party improves confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities and is therefore much better placed to reap the benefits of article IV of the NPT.

18. The Nordic countries recognize that peaceful applications of nuclear technologies go far beyond mere generation of nuclear power and can bring benefits to millions of people. We underline the importance of safety, security and safeguards as enablers of peaceful uses of nuclear

energy and other technologies, highlighting the central role of the NPT with this regard.

19. The Nordic countries are active participants and contributors to several international initiatives to prevent nuclear terrorism. One of the most prominent fora is the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism bringing together 88 nations worldwide. We are also committed to continuing our efforts for enhancing nuclear security.

To conclude, Mr. Chair,

20. The NPT establishes a fundamental global pact. There can be no doubt that the Treaty has served us well. We cannot allow review conferences with no agreed outcome to become the pattern. The stakes are too high. We have to join forces to maintain and strengthen the relevance of the Treaty and refrain from any action, which may undermine it. Faced with today's challenges we cannot resign – but must redouble our efforts. The NPT is vital for our security and well-being. We now have an opportunity to reaffirm the vitality and relevance of this treaty. Let us seize this opportunity by focusing on what unites us.