

Statement by Sweden, NPT PrepCom 2019, cluster 1

Mr. Chair,

Sweden associates itself with the statement delivered by the European Union in this cluster, as well as the statement made on behalf of the QUAD Nuclear Verification Partnership. Allow me to add a few remarks from our national perspective.

It is with great concern we witness current challenges to global security, including the increased reliance on nuclear weapons – among some nuclear weapon states and the fact that key bilateral arms control treaties are being abandoned or risk not being extended. This bleak scenario makes progress in cluster 1 more urgent than ever.

Next year, at the Review Conference, we have to re-affirm the importance of the Treaty and the validity of its previous commitments. Progress has to be made in all three pillars. On the way to our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons there can be no backtracking. Moving forward is the only option

Mr. Chair,

It is plain to see that all States Parties to the NPT must redouble our efforts to reach a united outcome next year. Sweden welcomes new ideas and approaches to this end.

In line with this, as my minister outlined earlier this week, Sweden is launching an initiative to put political weight behind the implementation of agreed actions under article VI. The objective is to enable state parties to demonstrate commitment towards the shared goal at the heart of the disarmament pillar. Together we need to identify what could constitute common ground and lead to concrete progress.

Actionable steps that build trust, defuse tensions and open up progress on the implementation of article VI must be pursued. Disarmament as a discipline should not reduce itself to playing the role of a passive observer awaiting the arrival of better times. There are things we should

do in the short and medium term which by themselves would contribute to a more conducive security environment

Let us take guidance from the agreed outcomes from 1995, 2000 and 2010. These disarmament commitments represent an *aquis* to be implemented through practical measures.

One area where progress has been achieved is nuclear disarmament verification. Verification cooperation enhances transparency, builds trust and confidence and could facilitate effective and credible implementation of future agreements. This is not least shown through the IPNDV and QUAD. We look forward to continued work in this area and encourage all nuclear weapon possessors to engage.

FMCT continues to be a priority for the NPT community. We must build on the progress that has been achieved in the high-level expert preparatory group led by Canada.

Few issues ought to require more attention than the elaboration of measures designed to reduce risk of intentional and unintentional nuclear use. This could include the improvement of crisis communication, creating a clear distinction between nuclear and conventional delivery systems and identifying command and control vulnerabilities.

Transparency, both with regard to nuclear arsenals and doctrines, and reinforced negative security assurances are also areas where common ground should be sought.

The entry into force of the CTBT is another key issue. All states that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in annex 2, should sign and ratify the treaty.

The overarching focus must be to contribute to a successful outcome by pursuing an ambitious yet realistic agenda, intended to create the necessary common ground.

Mr. Chair,

The INF Treaty is of crucial importance for global security not least in Europe. However slim the chances to save the treaty, we urge the Russian Federation to urgently make efforts to verifiably demonstrate its full compliance.

Sweden strongly encourages the Russian Federation and the United States to reach an agreement on an extension of New START beyond 2021. This would be a critical deliverable for the Review Conference.

Mr. Chair,

One of the most oft-repeated phrases in the debates on nuclear disarmament is that the NPT is its cornerstone. That is undeniably true. But even a solid cornerstone can wither, without care and maintenance. The consequences for global peace, security and stability would be very serious if the NPT was undermined by another failure to agree an outcome. Let us not lose sight of that in the build-up to the Review Conference next year.