STATEMENT

by

H.E. Ms. Elisabeth Borslin Bonnier
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Sweden to the United Nations and
Other International Organizations in Geneva

Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the
Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Cluster I

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)
Mr. Chairman,

Austria, Ukraine and Sweden would like to draw this meeting’s attention to the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons. There are several reasons why this issue is important.

In the current security environment, non-strategic nuclear weapons are of special concern. Due to their portability, their relatively small size and the availability of delivery vehicles for these weapons, they pose particular risks from a non-proliferation perspective. This also makes them appealing to terrorists. Furthermore, the possibility of their forward deployment could increase the risk of use.

There is also the worrying perspective that nuclear weapons arsenals are modernized and that new types of non-strategic nuclear weapons could be developed. Such plans go against the spirit of the NPT and many of the agreements made at the 2009 Review Conference. The development of new weapons may require nuclear testing which would undermine the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, as well as international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The many thousands – perhaps as many as 20,000 – of non-strategic nuclear weapons that exist continue to pose a potential threat to international peace and security. They are a global concern and we are many States Parties to the NPT that have these weapons close to our borders. We know too little about these weapons, due to the lack of transparency. For much too long they have been neglected in arms control and disarmament agreements.

In the Preparatory Committee so far, many contributions have been made on non-strategic nuclear weapons with the aim of moving this issue forward in the 2005 Review Conference. To this end, Austria, Ukraine and Sweden suggest that a set of recommendations are made by the Preparatory Committee to the Review Conference. These recommendations are included in our working paper, which is now being circulated. We welcome your comments and a continued dialogue in the Preparatory Committee as well as during the time leading up to the Review Conference.

Thank you.