Geneva

Statement by
Sweden

at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

General debate

Delivered by
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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on assuming the important task as Chair of this second NPT PrepCom session and assure you of the full cooperation of the Swedish delegation in our collective efforts to strengthen the NPT. Sweden fully subscribes to the statement by the European Union and the views expressed therein. I will therefore limit myself to some additional points in a national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

It is no secret that half a century ago, Sweden actively considered whether developing a nuclear arsenal would strengthen national security. Our clear conclusion was that it would not. Ever since, Sweden has been at the forefront of efforts to build security without nuclear weapons.

The NPT is a cornerstone of these efforts. Its fundamental bargain, based on the three mutually reinforcing pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, is still a sound and solid base. Over the years, the Treaty has been reinforced by commitments made in the review process, not least the 2010 Action Plan. Our collective efforts need to focus on a comprehensive implementation of the agreed actions – on all three pillars – in order to ensure a successful outcome of the current review cycle. We also fully support the ongoing preparations for a successful conference on the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

The opportunities created by the end of the Cold War have not yet been fully seized in terms of nuclear disarmament. Even now, in a transforming strategic environment, old postures and alert levels largely remain, as does the reliance on nuclear deterrence. In recent years, however, we have seen a growing understanding that these are weapons with diminishing strategic utility. Against the backdrop of the continued implementation of the new START agreement, and with the emerging series of meetings of the nuclear weapons states, we would like to encourage further talks aimed at continued reductions of arsenals of nuclear weapons. In our view, it is important that such a continued process also addresses sub-strategic, or tactical, nuclear weapons, as well as all non-deployed nuclear weapons. In this connection, Sweden would like to associate itself with the NPDI working paper on Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons.

Credible nuclear disarmament requires robust verification schemes. In Sweden’s view, the IAEA should continue to play a role in this field, given its mandate and its wide range of expertise and experience. Sweden stands ready to contribute and explore how relevant technical know-how to this end can be further developed.
Mr. Chairman,

Sweden believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing, and that steps need to be taken on both tracks. The most viable way forward is, in our view, the continued construction of an increasingly solid framework of reinforcing treaties and commitments – an approach that step by step narrows the margins for nuclear weapons. Among the currently most needed elements, or building blocks, we would like to point to the entry-into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty together with an expanded safeguard and verification monitoring system, not least through the IAEA. In parallel with such steps, the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines needs to be reduced.

The CTBT is a crucial element for both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The urgency of the entry into force of the CTBT is reinforced by DPRK’s recent nuclear test. As one of the current Article XIV Coordinators, Sweden has a special role in promoting the CTBT, and we call for its further ratification without delay, in particular by all remaining Annex 2 States.

Sweden is among the large number of states which have called for negotiations on an FMCT. As many others, we have supported proposals for a CD programme of work, which would enable this. We hope that the Group of Governmental Experts to be established on the FMCT next year can give impetus to multilateral disarmament negotiations, with the FMCT as a first step.

Sweden is an active member of the IAEA Board of Governors, striving to strengthen the IAEA safeguards system and uphold the IAEA’s important role in global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Recognizing the importance of all three pillars of the NPT, Sweden has contributed to the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative. Furthermore, Sweden finds it important to continue to discuss the development of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. We look forward to the full establishment of the IAEA LEU bank and encourage further steps to develop mechanisms for assurance of nuclear fuel supply.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

The use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, which is why we must work towards their elimination. A world free of nuclear weapons will not be realized tomorrow. But our work during this NPT review cycle and beyond can and should make an important contribution.

Thank you.