STATEMENT

by

the Delegation of Sweden

Main Committee III of the 2010 NPT Review Conference

United Nations
New York

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
Mr Chairman,

Sweden fully supports the statement made earlier by Spain on behalf of the EU and wishes to make the following short remark on a national basis.

Sweden attaches great importance to the concept of multilateral nuclear fuel assurances (MNA) and the work being done in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in this area. Sweden gives high priority to continuation of the work in IAEA.

Sweden has submitted a working paper on this topic (NPT/CONF.2010/WP.7), outlining the potential benefits of MNA.

Let me now highlight some elements mentioned in this paper.

MNA arrangements could, in Sweden’s view, be beneficial in adding to the generally desirable goals of increased supply assurance and non-proliferation. Recourse to MNA as a backup mechanism would be entirely voluntary, for any State to use or not to use.

Sweden is a highly industrialized State with advanced technological knowhow, including in the nuclear field. It depends on nuclear energy for about 45 percent of its electricity needs. This is produced in 10 reactors. When embarking on nuclear power in the 1950s, Sweden had ambitious plans and the technical capacity to master and utilize the whole nuclear fuel cycle from uranium milling to reprocessing. But for a number of reasons, including economic, industrial as well as environmental and political considerations, such plans were gradually abandoned in favour of utilizing a reliable international market for nuclear fuel services.

This Swedish example shows that even in the case of a fairly large national nuclear programme, reliance on a well-functioning international market has proved more advantageous than initiating costly and uncertain national schemes of doubtful value. A number of other countries have come to the same conclusion.

Generally, disruptions in the nuclear fuel market, for any reason, have been rare. Nevertheless, it is Sweden’s conviction that the availability of MNA-mechanisms would be a useful instrument to ensure supply to a State where an unforeseen need for Low Enrichment Uranium has arisen.
Sweden believes that MNA arrangements, whether in their more rudimentary form of a backup reserve or in a more developed future form, can play a very useful role for various categories of States. MNA arrangements will not infringe on the rights of States under the NPT.

In the NPT context, there would be at least two desirable consequences: MNA will make a contribution to enhanced security of supply, which will increase the stability and confidence of States embarking on the peaceful nuclear road. At the same time, such arrangements will have positive non-proliferation and confidence-building effects in regard to important parts of the nuclear fuel cycle.

All of this would seem to be in the general interest of all States parties to the NPT, whether they wish to be directly involved with MNA projects or not.

We believe that States Parties should be encouraged to make further efforts regarding MNA within the IAEA context.

To this end, Sweden has as earlier mentioned presented a working paper on MNA, in which we suggest that the Committee and the Review Conference should take note of the important work that has been carried out in the IAEA on MNA and encourage States Parties to make further efforts in this area.

In addition, I would like to draw your attention to Working paper 18 presented by the Vienna Group of Ten on approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, co-sponsored by Sweden.

We hope that these proposals will assist the work of the Committee.

Thank you.