STATEMENT

by

Ms. Annika Thunborg
Director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

at the

NPT Review Conference 2015
Main Committee 1 – Nuclear disarmament

United Nations
New York

7 May 2015

-Check against delivery-
Mr. Chairman,

Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union, and with statements made by Chile on behalf of the de-alerting group, Austria on behalf of the 15 co-sponsors of working paper 30 on the humanitarian impact, and Japan on nuclear disarmament education. In addition, we would like to make some comments from a national perspective.

Mr. Chairman,

This review conference takes place in a worsened security environment. The risk that nuclear weapons will be used deliberately or unintentionally, by states or by non-state actors, is greater than when we met five years ago. It is important that this reality guides our deliberations here, as increasing international tension makes nuclear disarmament all the more urgent.

Different countries have different perceptions, but let me be very clear: Sweden does not believe that nuclear weapons bring security, but the opposite – the existence of nuclear weapons makes us more insecure, and insecurity feeds further insecurity and further risk that nuclear weapons will be proliferated and used.

Besides bringing to the fore nuclear weapons' catastrophic consequences, the humanitarian narrative has highlighted the perspective that some countries claim to security, leads to insecurity for the rest of us, and also for themselves. In this context, it is important that the Review Conference takes account of WP 30 on the humanitarian impact. The paper accounts for the process that has evolved over the past five years and its results, and provides 12 forward looking recommendations. It would for example be important that this Review Conference:

- recognize that the immediate, mid- and long-term consequences of nuclear weapon detonations on health, environment, infrastructure, food, security, climate, development, social cohesion and the global economy are significantly graver than previously understood, interlinked and would not be constrained by national borders, but have regional or global effects, and may even threaten the survival of humanity.
- express dismay at the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and to reaffirm the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

- affirm that it is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances.

- be cognizant of the fact that the risk of nuclear weapons used can only be avoided through the total elimination of nuclear weapons (to which all parties to the NPT are committed), and the maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me also underline the importance of risk reduction measures being pursued and adopted. The role of nuclear weapons in security policy doctrines would need to be diminished and the operational readiness reduced. It would be important that this Review Conference takes account of the de-alerting group’s recommendations in WP 21 introduced by Chile. This includes urging nuclear-weapon States to engage constructively on the issue, for instance

- to take all steps to rapidly and comprehensively address the high risks relating to high alert levels, including by developing confidence-building measures, as well as further measures contributing to the prevention of accidental, unauthorized, inadvertent and unintended launches.

- to take steps to rapidly reduce operational readiness, including by making and implementing an inventory of options available.

- to provide annual report to this this end, enabling follow-up action.

We encourage leaders to endorse the recommendations of Global Zero’s de-alerting Commission, as has been done by Sweden’s Foreign Minister Margot Wallström. We would also like to see the Commission’s Track II which consists of high level experts from eight nuclear armed states be turned into a Track I.

Mr. Chairman,

The current security situation underscores the importance of addressing the disconnect between commitments and implementation in the NPT context.
Nuclear disarmament commitments made in 1995, 2000 and 2010, and notably the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons arsenals, must be acted upon without further delay.

It is important that the Russian Federation and the United States continue to implement the New Start Treaty. It would also be important that Russia takes up the offer made by President Obama to negotiate a second round of deep reductions in the nuclear arsenals. Of particular importance to Sweden would be to include the reduction and elimination of non-strategic nuclear weapons, so-called battlefield weapons, which are stationed close to our boarders and pose particular threats and risks. We also call upon the Russian Federation to preserve the viability of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which is of particular importance to European security.

The illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory constitutes a serious breach of international law, in complete contradiction with Russian obligations under the Budapest memorandum, and poses a serious challenge to the security situation in Europe and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament needs to be pursued in many different ways. There is not a single solution, but many. We see merit in putting different building blocks in place. I have already mentioned further reductions in all types of weapons as well as risk-reduction measures. Other essential components to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world would be a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in force and a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty in place, and Nuclear Weapon Free Zones entered into willingly by regional partners and respected by the nuclear weapon States through their adherence to the relevant protocols. The newly established International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification will aim to put in place technical solutions and methods necessary to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world.

There are working papers on the CTBT tabled by the European Union as well as the Vienna Group of 10 to which Sweden belongs and we urge the Conference to study these closely.
Mr Chairman,

It is important that the international community gets down to work and figure out what is really needed to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world in all its aspects.

Planned and additional legal instruments to implement Article VI of the NPT need to be taken forward and explored. The New Agenda Coalition has tabled a working paper that identifies a number of options, and there may be other ways forward. We are encouraged to see that both the United States and the Russian Federation refer to the need for multilateral disarmament in their statements and working papers.

Sweden would propose that this conference recommend that a body be set up to take discussions on nuclear disarmament forward in an inclusive, effective and structured way. By inclusive we mean that it should be open to all states, including states outside the NPT. By effective we mean that we need to ensure that results are achieved. By structured we mean that a process would need to be put in place to identify and pursue effective measures to implement Article VI of the Treaty. Such a body would preferably be an Open-Ended Working Group under the UN General Assembly, which would have the legitimacy of the UN system, but we are open to other options if they hold the promise of progress. The key word for us is progress, not process.

Mr. Chairman,

Last but not least, let me recall the 20 recommendations in WP15 on nuclear disarmament that Sweden has tabled together with its Nordic neighbors and introduced in the last meeting of this Main Committee. I would not want to repeat what I said then, but just highlight what we believe should be a guiding light for this Review Conference: that increasing international tension makes the implementation of disarmament commitments all the more urgent.

Thank you!