Statement

by

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– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY–
Let me first take this opportunity to thank Austria for hosting this important and timely conference.

Sweden believes in an approach to disarmament and international security that puts human beings front and center of policy. The equal and full participation of women and men are of key importance to attain sustainable peace and security.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons contravenes this approach. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic consequences, to humans and to the cultures and civilizations we have built. Hiroshima and Nagasaki taught us this, as did the many decades of nuclear testing with its devastation to humans, animals, plants, land and water for millennia to come.

We welcome the participation of nuclear weapon States and nuclear armed states at this conference. We are confident that this will help us achieve concrete results at next year’s NPT Review Conference, which will need to agree to move forward on the humanitarian perspective and on nuclear disarmament.

The presentations at this conference have been most impressive. We have learnt that more needs to be done in regards to crisis management, response and preparedness. We look forward to hearing more about this, in particular from States that possess nuclear weapons and thus have a special responsibility for these issues.

We have also learnt more about risk reduction and look forward to agreeing on concrete such measures in the upcoming NPT Review Conference and at other fora. De-alerting, the diminished role of nuclear weapons in security policy doctrines, no first use pledges, a strengthening of the norm against the use, the providing of security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States, and the securing and elimination of weapons grade materials, are all actions that need to be pursued. We also find the research conducted about the lack of utility and usability of nuclear weapons to be particularly interesting.

All countries have to be vigilant when it comes to meeting non-proliferation challenges. What is positive is that we in this area have put in place a functioning structure of mutually reinforcing treaties and agreements, international organizations such as the IAEA, and processes such as the Nuclear Security Summit to mention a few, to deal with these daunting challenges at all levels and in all possible ways. There is no lack of action and results here. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for nuclear disarmament.

The implementation of NPT:s article VI and the many disarmament commitments that have been made at Review Conferences for decades remain largely unfulfilled.

In today’s world, this status quo is becoming progressively dangerous. We live in an increasingly multipolar world with a growing number of actors, including non-state actors, who can gain
access to nuclear weapons. We live in a world characterized by new security challenges. It is even so that the importance of nuclear weapons seems to have increased for some countries. In such a world, the risk that nuclear weapons will be used by accident, miscalculation, unauthorization or design, has increased. The only real guarantee that these weapons will not be used is their total elimination, to paraphrase Presidents Gorbachev and Reagan’s conviction from nearly 30 years back.

The NPT Review Conference next year will need to produce tangible results so that nuclear disarmament efforts can indeed be moved forward. We cannot afford to have just another repeat of commitments already made. This will call into question the good faith commitment of NPT’s Article VI.

As with nuclear non-proliferation, mutually reinforcing measures at different levels are needed. The building blocks that have been agreed to for decades should be put in place: the CTBT, the FMCT, and deep reductions in strategic and tactical nuclear weapons between the Russian Federation and the United States, are some of the key elements here. It is not too late for President Putin to heed the calls by President Obama and move forward on reductions. A moratorium on the modernization and upgrading of the nuclear arsenals and the support of verification approaches to provide assurances of irreversibility for both weapons and materials, are other building blocks to be considered.

It is also essential that State Parties in the upcoming NPT Review Conference can agree to take multilateral nuclear disarmament discussions forward in a concrete way. This work should have been pursued in the Conference on Disarmament, but has been blocked for years. This is not acceptable. As long as the CD doesn’t produce results, we need to agree to conduct work in a multilateral fora that functions, for example an Open Ended Working Group under the UN General Assembly, where the different options that have been put on the table to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world can be discussed in an inclusive, transparent and productive way.

The humanitarian perspective has also underlined the importance of not limiting nuclear weapons issues to security policy discussions. Due to the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons and their effects beyond borders and time, it would be important that they be included, in appropriate ways, in discussions about human security, climate change, human rights, gender, health, and sustainable development, to mention a few examples. The humanitarian perspective of nuclear weapons needs to be mainstreamed into other areas of work. We look forward to continue our discussions with all of you on possible ways forward that will render results.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.