



SWEDEN

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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Geneva, 16 March 2004

Mr. President,

I am pleased to address the Conference on Disarmament under the presidency of Mexico. Sweden and Mexico have often worked closely together on matters on CD's agenda. Sweden will support you in any effort you will make to exert the prerogatives of the president to re-invigorate this once so capable negotiating forum, so that once again it can shoulder its responsibilities.

It is not acceptable that while concern mounts about serious developments in the world, while joint multilateral and global efforts are more needed than ever - the Conference on Disarmament is left by the wayside, contributing nothing.

Special efforts are called for. Nuclear weapons states have a special responsibility not to prevent this forum from seriously addressing nuclear concerns. And all states must make efforts to allow work to begin where work is possible, even if this might mean that all members might not be ready to deal with all important issues at the same time. If a first step is not taken, there will be no second or third step either.

Mr President,

Lately, a series of revelations about illicit programmes of weapons of mass destruction and attempts at proliferation have occurred. To this is added the networks of international terrorists and the fears that they might acquire weapons of mass destruction. These situations pose a grave threat to us all and we must promptly join forces to redress the present state of affairs.

Each case of clandestine weapons of mass destruction must be urgently dealt with.

- All attempts at proliferation must be countered.
- The world must be free from weapons of mass destruction.
- Existing international arms control and disarmament regimes must be complied with and made universal.
- Our possibilities to detect, at an early stage, non-compliance must be strengthened through effective use of existing verification arrangements and by devising new complementary mechanisms.

- Additional international norms and legal instruments must be negotiated, where lacunae exist. And important lacunae do exist.

Against the background of these overall policy considerations I will now address some of the issues involved.

Mr. President,

Weapons of mass destruction have lately come into the focus of the attention of international leaders and policy makers. In Iraq questions remain about Saddam Hussein's weapons programmes. The nuclear programme in the DPRK causes grave concern. Sweden hopes that the six party talks will bring the DPRK back into full compliance with the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state, allowing the IAEA to verify the complete and irreversible dismantling of the nuclear programme. Iran has signed the Additional Protocol and improved its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. This is welcome. However, reports of certain omissions in Iran's declaration on its nuclear programme have caused concern. Iran needs to show full transparency vis-à-vis the continued efforts of the IAEA to resolve all outstanding questions. Developments in Libya have helped to unravel a network of proliferators selling nuclear weapons materials to the highest bidder. Libya's decision to bring to a close, under international verification, its programmes of weapons of mass destruction is, however, a most welcome development.

While these developments raise serious concerns about weapons of mass destruction as a real threat to us all, they also demonstrate that diplomacy and a united international community working together can bring about positive results. As awareness has increased, so have the efforts to prevent and stop the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

Last year Sweden initiated a discussion within the European Union on how its policy on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction could be strengthened. Last December the EU adopted a strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Multilateralism is at the core of this strategy. Co-operation with other states and organisations is a key point and meeting the challenge of proliferation will be a central element in the EU's external policy.

The strategy covers a wide spectrum of measures. Using the instruments at its disposal, the EC will work with resolve to implement and universalise disarmament and non-proliferation norms and treaties, to reinforce compliance with them and to strengthen export controls. The EU will also support the establishment of additional international verification instruments.

Mr President,

A world free of weapons of mass destruction is a long standing priority for Sweden. For non-proliferation policies to be effective, credible and sustainable, disarmament is also necessary. Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. While there has been real progress towards the complete elimination of biological and chemical weapons, the same does not hold true for nuclear weapons. Instead we see a trend towards an increased emphasis on nuclear weapons as part of security strategies and signs that a new generation of nuclear weapons might be in the making. Such pursuits would undermine the credibility of the nuclear non proliferation regime and could prompt a new arms race.

To further address the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction the Swedish government has established an independent international commission on these weapons. We expect the commission, led by Dr Hans Blix, to give new impetus to the international work on disarmament and non-proliferation and new recommendations.

Mr President,

The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the foundation for nuclear disarmament and for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The 2005 NPT Review Conference will be crucial. And the outcome must be a strengthened regime. Lessons must be learned from the DPRK, Iran and Libya.

With the NPT five states were given a temporary right to possess nuclear weapons on the condition that they were to dismantle their nuclear arsenals. These five states have made an unequivocal undertaking to disarm. For the sake of making our world a safer place and for the sake of the NPT, they must honour their commitment. And other states must refrain from acquiring and developing nuclear weapons.

Eliminating the non-strategic nuclear weapons would be a decisive measure to prevent terrorism by nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the character of non-strategic nuclear weapons is such that military planners could be tempted to consider them usable as battlefield weapons. Blurring the lines between conventional weapons and non-strategic nuclear weapons would lower the threshold against the use of nuclear weapons. A binding and verifiable disarmament agreement on non-strategic nuclear weapons should be negotiated.

I want to reiterate Sweden's call for the implementation of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and especially the commitment regarding the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The entry into force of the CTBT should not be delayed further. Putting an end to nuclear testing would raise the threshold for acquisition of nuclear weapons and would help prevent a qualitative arms race. I therefore call on those states that have not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty as soon as possible.

It is also high time that negotiations are allowed to begin on a treaty that would end the production of fissile material, the key component of nuclear weapons. By negotiating such a treaty, the Conference on Disarmament can make a major contribution. I call on all states here represented not to delay this any further.

The NPT, with its near-universal membership is part of international law and should be respected as such also by countries that have yet to accede to it. I call upon India, Israel and Pakistan to respect the norms of the treaty pending their accession to it as non-nuclear weapons states.

The right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy is an essential part of the NPT. And IAEA safeguards are necessary companions to that right. Recent events have demonstrated the vital importance of the Additional Protocols. They provide the IAEA with the necessary enhanced means and authority to verify that states comply with their non-proliferation commitments.

Mr President,

The Convention on Chemical Weapons prescribes real disarmament of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction. But the task is still not completed. Chemical weapons destruction work must proceed at the most rapid pace possible. We need to continue our work towards

effective implementation of the Convention. We must also ensure that all states join the Convention. There is no reason why a state with nothing to hide should stay outside.

It is alarming that terrorists are taking an interest in biological weapons. This calls for a strengthened international approach to non-proliferation of biological weapons and related materials and technology. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention must be given more teeth and a mechanism of verification. Sweden supports all efforts to strengthen the BTWC-regime, by the European Union, by the International Committee of the Red Cross and by others.

Access to long range ballistic missiles in combination with technology and know-how regarding weapons of mass destruction give cause for considerable concern. The international code of conduct on missile proliferation that was launched in 2002 is the only multilateral instrument that deals with ballistic missiles. This code should be turned into a legally binding instrument accompanied by measures for verification of compliance. As a first step, I call on all states to accede to the Code.

Mr President,

Let us not forget that also conventional weapons constantly pose a threat to the lives of many people around the world. Terrorists and criminals profit from the easy flow of small arms, which also fuel local and regional conflicts and undermine the fabrics of fragile societies.

Combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a crucial part of our efforts to improve security. Export controls, including control of arms dealers, increased transparency in arms trade and marking and tracing of arms are areas where we need to strengthen international norms.

There is an inherent relationship between security and sustainable development. We need a coherent approach to conflict prevention and the reconstruction of war-torn countries.

Sweden welcomes the adoption last November of a protocol on explosive remnants of war to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCW). The protocol is presently before the Swedish Parliament for consideration.

Nevertheless, further work is needed to increase the protection of civilians, not least by preventing munitions, including sub munitions, from becoming explosive remnants of war. Sweden will continue to pursue this issue within the CCW-process.

Five years after the entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty more than 140 countries have joined the Convention and more than 31 million mines have been destroyed. This is an achievement. But innocent civilians are still maimed and killed by antipersonnel mines. In order to rid the world of the human suffering caused by antipersonnel mines the treaty has to become truly universal. The Swedish government therefore regrets the recent decision by the United States to pursue its landmine policy outside the framework of this important Convention. The first review conference in Nairobi later this year must give a strong political commitment to the universality of the Convention.

Mr President,

We are faced with real threats to global, regional, local and human security. These are global challenges that can only be met through joint efforts. Our future depends on our abilities to work together. It depends on effective multilateralism. The world cannot afford that the single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations remains idle. It is urgent that the deadlock in this body, the Conference on Disarmament, is broken.

Thank you, Mr. President.