Explanation of Vote (before the vote) by Sweden and Switzerland on L.35 entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”.

Mr. Chair,

I am taking the floor for a joint explanation of vote by Sweden and Switzerland regarding draft resolution L.35 entitled “United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”.

We have long supported this resolution. We continue to share the general objectives of the resolution to unite as broad a membership as possible around common considerations and measures to make inclusive progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

While we will vote yes to the resolution as a whole, our delegations feel compelled to put on the record a number of fundamental concerns that we have about several elements in this year’s draft resolution.

We understand and support the inclusion of more affirmative language regarding the development of the nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs of the DPRK, which poses a grave global threat.
But we regret that the goal of achieving the total elimination of nuclear disarmament is now conditioned by new considerations and that a number of key nuclear disarmament commitments are not accurately reflected.

In particular, we have significant concerns about a number of paragraphs that could be understood by some as qualifying or interpreting provisions of the consensus documents of successive NPT review conferences,

This applies in particular to OP2,

- We consider that the “unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI”, undertaking which is part of both the 2000 and 2010 NPT final document, remains fully valid,
- The resolution cannot be taken as reinterpreting or rewriting this essential undertaking nor the corresponding obligation under international law,
- In view of facilitating our continued support for the resolution, we fully expect that OP2 will be revised, when the resolution is submitted in the future.

Similar concerns and considerations apply to other paragraphs of the resolution, notably regarding PP19 and OP8. While we continue to fully support the humanitarian consequences language, we will abstain in these separate votes because the language deviates from agreed language by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which expressed “its deep concern at
the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons”. This acquis applies to all NPT States Parties.

Similar concerns also apply to OP10, OP13, OP14 and OP21, the list not being exhaustive. Actions set forth in the NPT stand on their own, and cannot be made dependent on new conditionalities.

We take this opportunity to state clearly that Sweden and Switzerland will firmly oppose any attempt to reinterpret, reverse, or rewrite previous outcomes in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are convinced that now, more than ever, it is essential to hold the course in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and stand by agreed roadmaps and principles.

We stand ready to continue to work closely with all sponsors of the resolution, in view of uniting the UN membership, notably in view of achieving concrete outcomes at the Review Conference to the States Parties of the NPT in 2020.