SWEDEN

STATEMENT

by

H.E. Eva Walder
Ambassador for Disarmament

at the

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United Nations New York

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Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by congratulating you and the other members of the bureau. I assure you of the full cooperation of the Delegation of Sweden.

Sweden fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union as well as the statement delivered by Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries. I will now add the following points in a national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

The international security situation is unpredictable. It has certainly not improved since we met a year ago. There is an apparent lack of dialogue on nuclear disarmament between the nuclear powers and stalemate in nuclear disarmament negotiations. Modernization of nuclear weapons continues, and there is a nuclear arms build-up in South Asia. North Korea’s nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes are horrifying. The entry into force of the CTBT remains elusive and the Conference on Disarmament is blocked. Chemical weapons have yet again been used, so far without accountability for the atrocities.

So how can we, in this committee, contribute to start turning this challenging situation around?

First, we must focus on the NPT and the review conference in 2020. Ensuring a successful outcome of that conference is imperative. This has to be done in earnest by both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states in cooperation. And in a manner that is both ambitious and realistic. The first preparatory committee laid a promising foundation, but the preparatory committees in 2018 and 2019 have to reach substantive results. The nuclear weapon states must abide by their obligations and commitments under Article VI, and acknowledge that the NPT does not give them the right to possess nuclear weapons forever. The non-nuclear weapon states must hold on to their commitments to the NPT as the cornerstone for non-proliferation and disarmament.

The provocative actions by the DPRK must not be followed by any member of the international community. Its illegal and accelerating nuclear and ballistic missile programmes constitute a clear threat to international peace and security. It further heightens regional tensions.

In stark contrast to the DPRK situation, the JCPOA demonstrates the potential of multilateral diplomacy. Its full implementation is essential, as is the avoidance of any action undermining mutual trust. The JCPOA also underlines
the indispensable role of the IAEA. Prompt ratification of the Additional Protocol by Iran, and accession by other states that are not applying the current NPT verification standard, would greatly strengthen the work of the Agency.

Secondly, critics of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons should recognize that the treaty, notwithstanding its shortcomings, is an earnest expression by governments and civil society to see a world free of nuclear weapons and to rid the world of the fear of annihilation. It was triggered by an undeniable lack of progress in existing fora. The treaty can contribute to strengthening the norm against the possession and use of nuclear weapons. For our part we have started a national process of comprehensively analysing the treaty before any decision is made on possible future accession. Let us leave behind us the unproductive dead-lock on the prohibition treaty, and instead focus on what unites us.

Mr. Chairman,

Russia and the United States must take the lead in restarting the reduction of nuclear weapons. The INF must be upheld, and the New Start agreement be followed by negotiations on further reductions. Though the circumstances are not exactly the same, it was possible to negotiate important treaties in periods when the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States was severely strained. So it might be possible now as well. A difficult relationship is no excuse not to act, on the contrary, it makes it more urgent to do so. The P5 dialogue on nuclear issues needs to restart immediately.

Mr. Chairman,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Great progress has been achieved, as illustrated by the destruction of the last declared chemical weapons in Russia last month. However, we are dismayed at the continued use of chemical weapons, in particular the sarin attack in Idlib province last April. Sweden is engaged in the Syria chemical weapons issue as a member of both the UN Security Council and the Executive Council of the OPCW. We applaud the important work conducted by the OPCW and the Joint Investigative Mechanism, and renew our call for accountability.

Sweden regrets the failure to reach a substantive outcome at last year's Review Conference for the biological weapons convention. We will continue to support training and scientific cooperation for the UN Secretary General's Investigative Mechanism, and also to be engaged in the Global Partnership and the Global Health Security Agenda.
Mr. Chairman,

Small Arms and Light Weapons kill half a million people every year. Armed violence and armed conflict attacks the very basis of economic and social development in many parts of the world, generating uncertainty, destroying or damaging economic infrastructure and weakening governance. Societies are being brutalized, domestic and intimate-partner violence is increasing and the public space for women is reduced. We must all gain a better control of these weapons including ammunition. Next Year’s Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action on illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons will provide an important opportunity to strengthen our work against the illicit trade. Sweden also encourages all states to join the Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General, in his address to the United Nations, wisely said that “There is an urgent need to prevent proliferation, to promote disarmament and to preserve gains made in these directions”. We could not agree more. The High-Representative on Disarmament, in her intervention to the Conference on Disarmament, gave us good advice on the United Nations machinery for disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Sustainable security can only be attained through cooperation and disarmament. The lack of cooperation and disarmament has led to a more unstable and insecure world. This development has to be turned around.

Let this committee contribute by laying a sound foundation for the High-level meeting on Nuclear Disarmament next year and the NPT Review Conference in 2020.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.