SWEDEN

STATEMENT

by

H.E Ann-Sofie Nilsson
Ambassador for Disarmament and Non-proliferation

at the

Thematic Debate in the nuclear cluster of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly First Committee
United Nations New York

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Mr Chair,

[ Sweden fully subscribes to the statement by the European Union.]
Let me now elaborate on some [national]/specific perspectives on this matter.

It is worth recalling that a nuclear weapons free world is an overarching goal to which we are all committed. The fact that we have a tense and unpredictable security climate makes this task more urgent – not less. For Sweden, security policy as well as humanitarian considerations underpin our strong engagement for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Current trends, not least a quantitative and qualitative modernization of nuclear arsenals, stand in sharp contrast to the imperative of making further progress towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We must always bear in mind that disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. Progress in both areas are mutually reinforcing and will contribute to a more secure world. Regarding non-proliferation, Iran and DPRK remain priorities for Sweden, as outlined in our statement in the general debate.

Mr Chair,

The NPT should be the main avenue as we seek ways to break the stalemate plaguing multilateral disarmament diplomacy. Preparations for the critical Review Conference in 2020 must now enter a more concrete phase. Our approach should be both ambitious and realistic, our deliberations geared towards finding common ground and conducted in a spirit of compromise.

Apart from a clear-cut political re-affirmation of our continued adherence to the NPT, we must ensure that there is no back-tracking on previous commitments made at successive Review Conferences, in particular in 1995, 2000 and 2010. With their special responsibility, nuclear weapon states must constructively engage to advance implementation of Article VI-related obligations.

But 2020 cannot only look backwards, a forward-looking agenda must be developed as well. The potential items on such an agenda are no big secrets. They include risk-reduction measures, including lowering of operational readiness levels, transparency measures and verification. Negative security assurances, CTBT entry into force and the launching of FMCT negotiations are other staples of the
discussion - all of them crucial issues on which Sweden has a longstanding engagement, diplomatically and with technical expertise.

Yet, as we all know, in terms of political deliverables none of them constitute low-hanging fruit ripe for picking. Yet, we cannot resign. Instead, we should launch more detailed discussions with the aim of identifying specific areas within these broad issues where progress might be possible. We cannot come up empty-handed in 2020.

As we seek areas for increased interaction between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states, disarmament verification offers one of the most promising avenues. Through the IPNDV and QUAD projects, we have gained a better understanding of the challenges involved and how these can be overcome. This includes effective ways of addressing proliferation concerns. Verification enhances transparency, builds confidence and – by creating the necessary technical capabilities – could facilitate effective and credible implementation of future agreements. Sweden strongly encourages more nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states to engage in this field.

Mr Chair,

Earlier this year, Sweden – together with a group of other CD presidents – was involved in efforts to break the prolonged deadlock of the Conference. The decision to establish subsidiary bodies for discussions on the CD agenda items was a step in right direction, allowing for substantive work to be conducted. CD members must now build on this progress, and aim higher as we move forward. The ambition must always be the adoption of a programme of work which includes a negotiation mandate – CD’s core business.

The Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons opened for signature in September 2017. As regards Sweden, an independent inquiry is assessing the potential consequences of a Swedish accession to the treaty, including on other Swedish disarmament and non-proliferation engagements, our security and defense cooperation and legal ramifications.

Mr Chair,
The responsibility for strengthening international security by filling the existing framework for nuclear disarmament with dynamic and constructive initiative is ours. Sweden urges all States to take it on them, to deliver on this fundamental responsibility. In a world of heightened tensions, backtracking on prior commitments, implies increased risk for all. There is no time like the present to show our commitment to create a sustainable security.