Geneva

Statement by H.E. Ms Ann Linde
Minister for Foreign Affairs
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President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

We cannot take a passive stance on the nuclear threat.

A worsening global security environment has led to milestone treaties and agreements being abandoned or facing an uncertain future and new nuclear capabilities being developed.

Long-established norms are being challenged, as is the integrity of multilateral institutions.

The current polarization and paralysis of multilateral disarmament frameworks are both deeply worrying and dangerous. The absence
of trust is moving states further apart from each other in areas
where agreement and cooperation are crucial.

This year marks the 75th commemoration of the nuclear bombings
in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It should serve as a reminder of the
indisputable fact that one single nuclear explosion causes
catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

Our collective goal of a world free from nuclear weapons is more
relevant than ever – yet it remains distant.

Consequently, disarmament and non-proliferation remain a central
foreign and security policy priority for the Swedish government.

President,

We are meeting today in the Council Chamber of the Palais des
Nations in Geneva, the seat of the Conference on Disarmament,
For well over two decades, this forum has not conducted any
negotiations, nor has it been able to agree on something seemingly
obvious – its own programme of work.
Regrettably, the beginning of this year’s session of the CD has been no exception. Nevertheless, I welcome your announcement made last Friday, Mr President, that we may be close to an agreement on a programme of work already this week. I would therefore like to echo your call for common sense to prevail. We have a shared responsibility to revive an ossified disarmament diplomacy.

President,

On 5 March we will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty entering into force. This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the treaty’s indefinite extension. It is an historic occasion for a treaty that has served our collective security very well for decades.

The NPT constitutes the cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. It has been successful in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, laying the foundation for significant reductions in nuclear arsenals and
facilitating the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is truly an impressive achievement.

The 2020 NPT Review Conference will begin in less than two months.

The Review Conference provides an opportunity for states parties to strengthen the NPT. This opportunity must be seized. I would like to congratulate and warmly welcome Ambassador Gustavo Zlauvinen who was recently nominated President-Designate of the conference. I am confident that he will steer the states parties in the right direction and will receive full support and cooperation.

President,

Tomorrow my colleague the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas and I will co-chair the second Ministerial Meeting of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament. This initiative brings together 16 non-nuclear weapon states at a high political level. We are united in our engagement to strengthen
the NPT. We strive to mobilize political momentum for an ambitious yet realistic outcome of the Review Conference and beyond, with particular focus on disarmament.

This should not be interpreted as a lack of engagement on the other NPT pillars. The Review Conference will need a balanced outcome which includes all three pillars. They are an indispensable part of the NPT fabric: important and mutually reinforcing. They all need to be part of a consensus package.

The disarmament-related commitments and obligations from past Review Conferences – notably in 1995, 2000 and 2010 – remain valid. Several are still outstanding and should be implemented urgently.

The main features of the Stockholm Initiative can be described through six C:s.

*Common ground* - the explicit purpose of the Stockholm Initiative is to build political support for a pragmatic and result-oriented disarmament agenda within the NPT framework. The Initiative
aims to reach common ground and promote a successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference.

**Compatibility** - the Stockholm Initiative does not seek to replace any other initiatives or groupings that already exist. Instead, it seeks to complement others by building broad political support for an ambitious and realistic disarmament agenda. There are many points of convergence where various initiatives and groupings could reinforce each other in the run-up to and at the Review Conference.

**Composition** - the Stockholm Initiative brings together a quite diverse group of sixteen engaged non-nuclear weapon states - we have different geographic perspectives and security policy profiles. This is in itself a source of strength and credibility because it requires a degree of internal bridge-building and a constructive mindset, which also must be applied among the broader NPT membership ahead of the Review Conference.

**Collaboration** - the Stockholm Initiative has a collaborative and
inclusive approach. It is an invitation to all states parties to the
NPT - nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states - to engage in a
result-oriented dialogue. All state parties must be ready get out of
their “comfort zones” and engage in a spirit of compromise in
order to reach concrete results. I look forward to broad outreach
by members of the initiative in the weeks to come.

**Concept** – a crucial part of the Stockholm Initiative is the stepping
stones approach which can be best described as an action-oriented
methodology. It takes a new look at the traditional
disarmament agenda – in breaking down long-standing items into
more digestible parts - it seeks to identify “actionable” measures
which are within reach in the current security environment.

**Confidence-building** - the Stockholm Initiative also tries to
support rebuilding of trust. The absence of trust between states is a
major barrier to disarmament progress. The stepping stones
approach seeks to re-build mutual confidence by engaging key
actors in a practical, rather than normative, incremental process. It
seeks to engage states in a cooperative and inclusive process
moving in a positive direction – through concrete steps - towards
By identifying and implementing short-term measures we can mitigate current risks but also pave the way for further steps and progress on nuclear disarmament – this is the essence of the approach. Our meeting in Berlin tomorrow will be the occasion – at Ministerial level – to agree upon the political message and the stepping stones we jointly want to bring to the Review Conference.

Already in the Stockholm Declaration, the founding document of the initiative, we identified potential areas such as:

- more transparent and responsible declaratory policies,
- measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines and policies,
- ways of enhancing transparency and of reducing risks of any use of nuclear weapons,
- strengthened negative security assurances,
- work on nuclear disarmament verification, and
- the importance of addressing the production of fissile material.
From a Swedish perspective - a comprehensive approach should be applied with stepping stones being adopted in each of these mutually reinforcing categories.

What we need is a political leadership, constructive engagement on substance and contributions from all states parties. The nuclear weapon states have a special responsibility in this regard.

President,

Overcoming the present crisis in strategic arms control is desperately needed. I call upon the United States and Russia to come to an early agreement of the extension of New START. This treaty is a crucial component of global security and would provide a key scene setter for the Review Conference.

I am convinced that progress is possible, even in challenging times. We can - with strong political will and forward-looking mindset - start the journey of unlocking disarmament diplomacy through delivering upon commitments.
We should take the chance.

I thank you!