

**Statement by Finland**  
**Conference on Disarmament**

**H.E. Jarmo Viinanen, Ambassador for Arms Control at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

**February 2021**

Excellencies,

Dear Delegates,

The circumstances of international meetings remain exceptional. The pandemic has forced severe restrictions on the work of the Conference on Disarmament. At the same time disarmament and arms control are needed more than ever to enhance international peace and security.

As the single multilateral negotiation forum for disarmament matters, the Conference on Disarmament has a unique role in advancing international peace and security. The work of the CD is as important as it is demanding. The CD has been in a stalemate for too long a time. There are questions and doubts as to the relevance of the CD. It is up to each of us to retain the CD as a significant body in advancing disarmament.

In nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, our focus must remain on ensuring a forward-looking and successful NPT review. Past NPT commitments in all three pillars – disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses - remain valid and form the basis for making further progress in accomplishing the objectives of the Treaty. It is essential that the Review Conference send an unequivocal message that nuclear weapons must never be used again.

In nuclear disarmament, ambition and realism are needed in equal measure. The Stockholm initiative on nuclear disarmament has successfully combined both approaches. The result is a package of practical and achievable measures to advance nuclear disarmament. We hope that these proposals will continue to attract an even wider support. The Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) initiative has facilitated an active dialogue and engagement between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states. We hope that this engagement will lead to a better understanding of the imperatives, possibilities and challenges of nuclear disarmament and pave a way towards achieving it.

In a volatile environment, the predictability and stability that arms control can bring is more important than ever. Finland welcomes the decision by the United States and the Russian Federation to extend New START for a further five years. We encourage these biggest nuclear powers to seek further reduction in their strategic nuclear arsenals and expand the scope of nuclear arms control to cover non-strategic nuclear weapons and new types of weapon systems.

Our ultimate goal is a world free of nuclear weapons, with increased security for all. There is no shortcut to this goal. Nuclear disarmament is complicated, it is difficult, but it is possible. It is high time for all the nuclear weapon possessors to show a stronger commitment to and take concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament.

I wish the best of success for the work of the Conference on Disarmament in 2021!