



Government Offices of Sweden
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

STATEMENT

delivered by

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Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

at the

Conference on Disarmament, High-Level-Segment

22 February 2021

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVER -

President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The past year has been a challenging one for all of us. The Covid19-pandemic has had a profound impact on our societies and well over 2 million people have lost their lives.

However, through cooperation and multilateral efforts, 2021 has the potential to see us overcome many threats. The same resolve and spirit of collaboration needed to fight the virus is now required to address those threats that may cause untold human suffering.

President,

Each passing year brings with it new hope that the Conference of Disarmament will find the political will necessary to break the deadlock which has paralyzed it for far too long. That the conference has not been able to adopt gender neutral rules of procedures is quite telling and deeply troubling.

The items on the CD agenda remain as relevant as ever and as the “the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiating body” this forum carries a special responsibility. We cannot afford to let endless procedural debates stand in the way of much needed substantive work. We call on all States to show flexibility and a pragmatic approach in the work ahead. We hope that this year may bring better promise in getting the CD back on track than what the past two decades have done.

Positive steps are urgently needed if we are to set the stage for a successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference. In this regard, Sweden warmly welcomes the agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation to

extend the New START Treaty, a crucial contribution to international and European security. We strongly encourage further talks and negotiations, including with China, on broader arms control agreements.

President,

The upcoming NPT Review Conference provides a crucial opportunity for state parties to strengthen all three pillars of the NPT. We need to reaffirm the validity of previous commitments and to achieve real and much needed progress, not least in regard to article VI.

The Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament aims to do just that – to help make progress possible even in challenging times.

Through a series of ministerial meetings – in Stockholm, Berlin and Amman - and the adoption of the Berlin-declaration and the 22 Stepping Stones, the Initiative's diverse group of 16 Non-Nuclear Weapon States strive to reenergize nuclear diplomacy.

By identifying ambitious, concrete and realistic steps that all States may take, but in particular Nuclear Weapon States, the Initiative aims at reducing nuclear risks, advance nuclear disarmament and achieve a successful outcome of the Review Conference.

In the months to come, members of the Stockholm Initiative will intensify our efforts and reach out to both Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Weapon States. We will engage with other initiatives and groups, both governmental and civil society, with the aim of reaching common ground and strengthening the NPT.

Sweden would like to thank all those States that have already formally aligned with the Berlin documents including the Stepping Stones proposal of the Stockholm Initiative and we invite all other NPT States Parties to do the same.

President,

The time for action is upon us. What we need now is political leadership and constructive engagement, not least from Nuclear Weapon States.

I thank you