



Permanent Representation
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva

CD Thematic Discussion on Negative Security Assurances (NSA)
Statement by the Permanent Representative of Germany
to the Conference on Disarmament,
Ambassador Peter Beerwerth, 8 June 2021

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Mr. President,

Reviving Security Assurances serves as the concrete objective to strengthen the NPT and to further promote international peace and security. Therefore, the discussion today is not only timely but highly pertinent. It is with good reason that this topic has been an undisputed, long standing item on the CD's core agenda.

Discussions in the CD have evolved over time to a degree that some members even called NSA a low hanging fruit for negotiations in the CD. In 2017 and 2018 Germany chaired respective working groups/subsidiary bodies in which the discussions even converged on a number of commonalities. Despite the inability to adopt final consensus reports, the commonalities themselves were undisputed.

Because commonalities have unfortunately become a rather rare occurrence in our daily work I take the liberty to read them out again:

- Delegations acknowledged the positive effect of NSA on the policies of non-nuclear weapon states not to aspire, develop, acquire or possess nuclear weapons and thus on the non-proliferation regime and disarmament in general
- NSA were seen as possible practical steps contributing to overall and general global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, not constituting

an end in itself but rather a pragmatic step to the final goal of a world without nuclear weapons

- States noted that NSA could act to reinforce and strengthen other disarmament instruments and measures
- Nuclear weapons free zones were seen as measures that could be more effective if respective protocols with applicable provisions were signed by all relevant states
- States considered the CD as the most appropriate forum to discuss NSA and their context

Taken as a whole or even singled out, these commonalities could serve as a good basis for concrete discussions or even negotiations in the context of an agreed program of work in the CD.

In our eyes the rationale for moving forward with NSA is simple: NSA serve as an important intermediary step on the way towards a world free of nuclear weapons and therefore constitute a concrete element of a step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament. But they are – if granted and implemented in good faith - per se also an element of risk reduction in the overall strategic environment and a practical contribution to increasing confidence and trust in international relations.

We are therefore not alone calling upon all Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) to review their declaratory policies regarding the potential employment of nuclear weapons, most notably Security Assurances to Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS), as they have played an important role in assuring the accession and adherence of NPT members to the Treaty and in facilitating the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995.

In our eyes NSAs whether as politically binding commitments in the context of declaratory policy or as binding international law as in the context of the protocols of existing nuclear weapon free zones are also an element of fairness in international politics, as NNWS have voluntarily foregone a military nuclear option for the sake of international peace and security.

However, since NPT member states committed themselves to concrete steps to strengthen and broaden existing NSA as enshrined in actions 7-9 of the 2010 NPT Action Plan, various developments have called the status and reliability of the existing NSA into question. In the current tense state of play of the international security environment we have seen

instances of explicit and implicit threats, which raises the question of the role of existing Security Assurances. A particular case in point is the adherence to the Budapest memorandum.

Therefore, participants of the Stockholm Initiative, have earmarked NSAs as part of their –Stepping Stones- Action Plan for Nuclear Disarmament and called upon Nuclear-Weapon States, collectively or individually, to tighten NSA, including in the context of Treaties establishing Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones.

Thank you Mr. President!