2022 High-level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament
28 February 2022

Statement delivered by Ms Ann LINDE, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

President, Distinguished Delegates,

The global security environment continues to rapidly deteriorate. The polarization and lack of trust among states has increased. New nuclear capabilities are developed, and arsenals are modernized. The integrity of multilateral institutions and the international rules-based order is under threat.

Despite this, the start of 2022 saw some positive developments, in particular the joint statement by the five Nuclear Weapons States. The affirmation that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought, the determination to strengthen stability and predictability and to continue seeking bilateral and multilateral diplomatic approaches to avoid military confrontations was much welcomed.

And yet, while we meet here today the basic tenets of Europe’s security are under attack. Russia’s military attack against Ukraine is a clear violation of international law including the UN Charter. Sweden fully supports Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its
internationally recognized borders, including Crimea, as well as its sovereign right to freely choose its own security arrangements. We resolutely condemn the invasion of Ukraine by the armed forces of the Russian Federation and call on Russia to refrain from further provocations, escalations and illegal use of force, to unconditionally withdraw from Ukraine, to end the illegal annexation of Crimea and to engage in dialogue with the aim of restoring security, stability and peace in Europe.

President,

Given the current security situation, the risk of another nuclear arms race, or actual nuclear use, cannot be ignored. To effectively tackle global disarmament and non-proliferation challenges and achieve long-lasting and sustainable solutions, we must make use of all available multilateral platforms – including the Conference on Disarmament.

While Sweden values and remains fully committed to the Conference on Disarmament it is deeply troubling that this forum has remained in a deadlock for the past decades, unable to adopt a Programme of Work or even gender-neutral Rules of Procedure. Political will is needed to allow the CD – the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiating body - to fulfil its purpose. It is therefore with cautious optimism that Sweden welcomes the decision by the Conference to establish Subsidiary Bodies. Sweden urges all states to contribute to breaking the current impasse and allow the Conference to advance on substance.

President,

Sweden has a longstanding commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control with the goal to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons. We look forward to the 10th Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament is a clear example of how Sweden, together with others, actively seeks to achieve much needed progress. The Initiative offers concrete and pragmatic measures for
advancing nuclear disarmament, allowing for substantial and incremental progress. We urge all states to consider our proposals. Achieving full implementation of all obligations and commitments under the NPT should be of paramount importance to all states.

President,

The rapid technological development in several fields means that the international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control architecture faces new challenges. These developments may in some cases lead to positive results but can also have destabilizing effects on different domains, including outer space.

The dual-use nature of many space systems, in combination with a lack of transparency, could increase risks of misunderstanding and miscalculation. This underlines the importance of continued multilateral efforts to strengthen security and prevent an arms race or conflict in outer space. Sweden sees great merit in voluntary norms of responsible behaviour as a step to contribute to the reduction of threats and risks, with a view to improve space security and to contribute to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This could also contribute to possible legally binding measures in the future.

President,

The challenges are many and the need for dialogue and negotiations is greater than ever. Will the CD contribute or continue its impasse?

Thank you.