STATEMENT

by

SWEDEN

at the

1st Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW

United Nations

Vienna

22 June 2022
Mr President,

I join those before me in congratulating you and the other members of the bureau on your election as the first bureau of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Sweden participates in this meeting as an observer. We appreciate being able to join you here in Vienna, and will follow with interest the discussions over the next few days.

Sweden has a longstanding and continuous engagement for nuclear disarmament. Let me reiterate that the Swedish Government’s decision of 2019 to not sign nor ratify the TPNW stands. We note that the Treaty does not include any of the countries that possess nuclear weapons, which we do not see as a realistic or effective way forward. And we have already previously pointed to the Treaty’s other shortcomings, including remaining questions on its relation to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, lack of clarity of definitions, the verification regime and the scope of its application.

Mr President,

Almost 77 years ago the world's first nuclear explosion occurred on the plain in Almagordo Bombing Range, New Mexico. Less than a month later the world witnessed the horrific fate of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences that followed are still visible. The events in the summer of 1945 were the starting point of our common struggle to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons – a goal that all here present and all states parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty have committed to.

Yet, the backdrop to this meeting is a difficult one. In the last few months, the global security environment has severely deteriorated. Sweden condemns in the strongest terms the Russian Federation’s brutal and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. Russia’s military attack and threat of nuclear
weapons use are flagrant violations of international law, including the UN Charter.

Mr President,

While the horrors continue to unfold in Ukraine, we in parallel witness the development of new nuclear capabilities and modernizing of existing arsenals.

For decades, Sweden has been a strong advocate and active promoter of disarmament and non-proliferation – these efforts will certainly continue and will remain firmly rooted in the framework of the NPT, the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

The Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament is evidence of Sweden’s ambitions to contribute to achieving a safer and more secure world. The Initiative, launched in 2019 by Sweden together with 15 other non-nuclear weapons states - several of which are here today - aims to gather political engagement in relaunching disarmament efforts.

Since its inception, the Initiative has worked to develop ambitious yet realistic pathways for progress on nuclear disarmament, including steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines and policies, enhance transparency and promote equal participation by women and men as well as the participation of youth in disarmament affairs. The Initiative has also put forward a package of measures to reduce the risks that nuclear weapons are ever used again.

Mr President,

While nuclear weapon states bear a special responsibility in regard to disarmament and non-proliferation, all states can and should help to achieve progress. Promoting the early negotiations and establishment of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is one important way.
Another is the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. By constraining the development of new nuclear weapons, the CTBT helps foster international peace and security. The CTBT verification regime is also unique, providing the world with a global monitoring system for nuclear explosions.

Mr President,

Disarmament verification offers promising paths for cooperation between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states as it builds transparency and confidence. By creating the necessary technical capabilities disarmament verification efforts could facilitate effective and credible implementation of disarmament agreements.

In terms of verification, the IAEA has an indispensable role to play. Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols should be the universally applied safeguards verification standard. The Model Additional Protocol significantly increases the IAEA’s ability to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements. Sweden calls on all states that have not yet done so to apply this verification standard.

Mr President,

It is my delegation’s firm view that if we are to succeed in achieving a world free from nuclear weapons there is a need for political will and constructive approaches. Multilateralism, including civil society participation, offers the best avenue and remains our greatest chance to effectively address our common challenges and achieve our goals.

I thank you!