Statement by
Sweden
in the Open-Ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

General Exchange

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Geneva
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Mr Chairman,

My delegation would like to congratulate you on your appointment and to wish you every success in this important role.

Last autumn, Sweden voted in favour of UNGA resolution 67/56. Given the longstanding stalemate that we know only too well here in Geneva, efforts aimed at encouraging multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations should be supported. We hope that the OEWG will achieve this effect.

We believe that your approach, Mr Chairman, in structuring our work in such a way as to avoid, as far as possible, a repetition of the deadlocked situation of the CD, is wise. Nevertheless, certain realities and positions of states are likely to remain the same.

Mr. Chairman,

For Sweden, one the main premises of our views on nuclear disarmament is that, several decades ago, we came to the conclusion that nuclear weapons would not increase our security. Another is that Sweden strongly believes in the United Nations and in the disarmament treaties accomplished under its auspices. These need to be protected, promoted and strengthened in terms of their implementation.

Sweden also believes that the most viable way forward remains a continuous process of building a stronger international regime, by adding new agreements and commitments to the existing. While all states have a stake in this work, states which possess nuclear weapons need to participate. The NPT is a cornerstone for international security and its 2010 Action Plan should be fully and comprehensively implemented.
Sweden consistently encourages further talks aimed at continued reductions of arsenals of nuclear weapons. We strongly believe that the time has come to also address tactical nuclear weapons and wish to see them included in such talks.

Furthermore, the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines needs to be reduced. We believe that in recent years, we have witnessed a degree of realization that nuclear weapons have diminishing strategic utility. They certainly serve no purpose in dealing with the new security threats of the 21st century, not least from terrorists. Modernization of nuclear weapons will not change this, but rather risk delaying the obligation to complete nuclear disarmament.

The unimaginable devastation by nuclear war and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are integral to why we must not further delay our joint work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairman,

In terms of process and next steps, many of us often point to two measures that will help bar further nuclear armament and proliferation - that is to ban nuclear weapons tests and the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty remain key objectives, and we must not risk losing sight of them. Entry into force of the CTBT and the initiation of multilateral negotiations on an FMCT would indeed be tremendous steps forward.

As one of the current Article XIV coordinating countries, we strongly support all efforts to achieve an early entry into force of the CTBT. We reiterate our call for further signatures and ratifications by those states that have yet to do so, in particular those listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty.

The Group of Governmental Experts on the FMCT will be an important endeavour. A number of proposals for an FMCT already exist, and they contain much that can be followed up upon.

We hope that the OEWG can, among other things, discuss ways of promoting and advancing both these core disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

Mr Chairman,

Many obstacles still stand in the way of a world free of nuclear weapons. But our work here and in other settings can and should make an important contribution to much-needed progress.