

Statement by**H.E. Ann Linde****on behalf of members of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament****at the****10th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation
of Nuclear Weapons**

On behalf of Argentina, Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan, Jordan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, members of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament, I would like to begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Zlauvinen, on your presidency of the 10th Review Conference of the NPT. You have the Stockholm Initiative's full support.

We also welcome the 24 NPT States Parties that have aligned themselves with the Stockholm Initiative's working paper *Stepping Stones for Nuclear Disarmament*: Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bolivia, Brunei, Cambodia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Greece, Guinea Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Honduras, Iceland, Luxembourg, Mauritania, North Macedonia, Palau, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia and Uruguay.

We further appreciate the 14 NPT states parties that have co-sponsored our *Nuclear Risk Reduction Package*, listed in the working paper document. We welcome efforts and initiatives to accelerate disarmament by other groupings.

Mr. President,

We reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty – the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The Treaty has been indispensable for global peace and security for more than five decades. Yet, progress on Article VI – nuclear disarmament – is in clear and urgent

need. We are at a critical juncture, facing the risk of a threefold trend reversal – in nuclear stockpile reduction, in reducing the role of nuclear weapons and in successfully containing proliferation. The 76-year record of non-use of nuclear weapons must be maintained.

Mr President,

We recall the UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/1 and ES-11/2 calling on the Russian Federation to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders in accordance with the UN Charter.

Mr. President,

This Review Conference is a pivotal opportunity for all states to show high-level commitment and engage in a forward-looking agenda to advance nuclear disarmament. We are resolved to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons in an irreversible, verifiable and transparent manner, and to reduce risks they pose. In the interim, the Stockholm Initiative has presented a feasible way forward in this regard, one that is both realistic yet ambitious.

Coming from different regions and security contexts, the 16 countries of the Stockholm Initiative launched the Initiative in June 2019. We are united in the belief that constructive political and diplomatic engagement is essential to build the trust necessary for real progress towards our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. In bridging divides and proposing constructive solutions, our diversity is a strength.

The Stockholm Initiative's proposals to advance nuclear disarmament are outlined in our two joint working papers, submitted to this Conference: *Stepping Stones for Advancing Nuclear Disarmament* and *A Nuclear Risk Reduction Package*.

The Stepping Stones paper builds upon commitments from previous Review Conferences and our efforts in different fora. They consist of 22 practical steps to fulfil Article VI disarmament obligations and related commitments, including to reduce or further reduce nuclear arsenals and the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines, to enhance transparency, to proceed with negotiations on a treaty prohibiting fissile material production for nuclear weapons, to support efforts to

develop multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capacities, to strengthen negative security assurances and to ensure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Risks of nuclear weapons use will persist as long as there are such weapons. Our Nuclear Risk Reduction package urges the Conference to adopt concrete measures and a process for reducing the immediate threat posed by nuclear weapons use. Reducing nuclear risk is an urgent priority given international tensions, can build trust and complements efforts towards the overarching goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Urgent action is needed. Crisis communication hotlines should be revisited and adapted to meet current and future challenges, notably the deteriorated security environment, great power competition and regional tensions, stress on the nuclear arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, and the potentially destabilizing implications of several technological developments.

Regional proliferation challenges demand our full resolve, too, and increasingly so. This includes a return to full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme, which was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council. The denuclearization of the DPRK in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner, in full compliance with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, remains our firm objective.

We also reiterate our commitment to empowering younger generations, integrating diverse gender perspectives, and promoting the full and effective participation of women in nuclear disarmament decision-making. We encourage visits to and interaction with communities affected by nuclear weapons, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and former nuclear test sites such as Semipalatinsk and in the Pacific.

Mr. President,

All states *can* and *should* help drive progress on nuclear disarmament. But Nuclear Weapon States bear a special responsibility.

Last year, we welcomed the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) as well as the launch of a Strategic Stability Dialogue between the US and Russia. The Stockholm Initiative was encouraged by the P5 leaders' statement of January. These were positive developments now disrupted, that responded to two of our stepping stones for nuclear disarmament.

But more remains to be done. All nuclear weapon states need to contribute to next generation arms control arrangements. We urge all nuclear weapon states to positively consider the proposals of the Stockholm Initiative. We underline that disarmament obligations must be met by all nuclear weapon states, and commitments must be implemented, in full accordance with Article VI of the NPT. Going forward, we expect that all nuclear weapons states will commit to a process to take article VI implementation and risk reduction work forward.

Mr. President,

Our Stockholm Initiative efforts are also a response to the UN Secretary General's call to bring disarmament and non-proliferation back to the top of the international agenda, focus on practical measures, and overcome existing, serious divisions. In line with his agenda, we recognize that humanitarian and security considerations are not mutually exclusive and that they both underpin and lend urgency to all the international community's efforts.

Mr. President,

To ensure full implementation of commitments and further progress on global nuclear disarmament, there is a clear need for continued engagement on Article VI of the Treaty beyond this Review Conference. We are equally committed to further cooperation across the broad spectrum of nuclear opportunities and challenges – including peaceful nuclear uses as well as addressing proliferation challenges.

This is the time to demonstrate political leadership, to meet the obligations and honour the commitments and achievements made under the NPT, and to set ourselves on a decisive path towards a world free of nuclear weapons, in the interest of preserving humanity. We pledge to do our part.

Thank you.