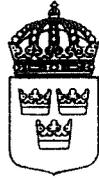


SWEDEN



STATEMENT

by

Mrs. Eva Walder

Ambassador for Disarmament

at the

General Debate of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly
First Committee

United Nations

New York

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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on assuming the important task as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of the full cooperation of the Swedish delegation. Sweden fully subscribes to the statement by the European Union. I would like to add the following points in a national capacity.

As my Minister said in her remarks in the UN General Assembly: The international community, more than ever before, share a common destiny. We can only master the challenges of geopolitical rivalries, destructive force of war and the tragic plight of refugees if we face them together. Today, we are witnessing blatant transgressions of disarmament agreements and humanitarian law, in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere. Chemical weapons, barrel bombs, cluster ammunition, and other indiscriminate weapons are targeting unarmed civilians and organizations providing humanitarian assistance in zones of armed conflict. While we meet here in New York, the civilian population of the city of Aleppo is being severely bombarded.

There must be accountability for such atrocities.

Let me now address nuclear weapons. We have reiterated many times our basic and firm position that the possession and deployment of nuclear weapons can never be the basis for a sustainable security for mankind. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are well documented and irrefutable.

Current developments give cause for concern. To highlight some of them:

- The DPRK has tested nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in complete contravention of its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions.

- States with nuclear weapons are investing or planning to invest in new systems ensuring that they maintain the capacity for the foreseeable future.
- In South Asia, the numbers of nuclear weapons are constantly increasing.
- 20 years after being opened for signature the CTBT has not yet entered into force.
- The Conference on Disarmament has yet again failed to agree on a Programme of Work.

Sweden will support all processes that could make a difference and be effective, including through concrete changes on the ground and through norms. In this vain, I will introduce a resolution on risk reduction later this week, on behalf of the dealerting group. For norms to be effective, they need to have sufficient support, provide an added value and be implemented by States.

The deliberations in the Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament demonstrated a strong commitment to make progress on nuclear disarmament, despite the ultimate lack of agreement. The Working Group's report contains important proposals on how to move forward to make the world more secure. In this context we thank the sponsors for their draft resolution Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which we are carefully studying.

The NPT remains the most important legal framework in the nuclear field. Obligations under the NPT and commitments undertaken during Review Conferences need to be implemented with increased urgency, including the unequivocal undertaking by the Nuclear Weapon States. Sweden's position is clear. The only guarantee that these weapons will never be used again is their total elimination.

Mr. Chairman,

Sweden welcomes the outcome of the Second Conference of States Parties to the ATT. This outcome puts the international community in a position where we are able to step up our efforts in the fight against irresponsible, unregulated and illicit arms trade. This opportunity should be seized.

The UN Program of Action remains our most important forum for addressing the illicit trade of small and light weapons. These weapons – and their ammunition – continue to destabilize societies and thus hinder peace and development. Sweden will stay fully engaged on this matter, also as a member of the Security Council in 2017 and 2018.

25 years have passed since the inception of the UN Register of Conventional Arms. The Register is as relevant as in 1991. A Group of Governmental Experts, led by ambassador Paul Bejler of Sweden, has conducted a review of the Register and will later this month present its report and its recommendations. Sweden encourages other member states to report their national armaments.

Sweden remains firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its protocols. Sweden very much appreciates the discussions held on lethal autonomous weapon systems. As States we have an obligation to assess the legality of new weapons. Sweden will support a decision to create, at the Review Conference, a Group of Governmental Experts to examine this issue further.

Mr. Chairman,

Sweden is appalled with the continued use of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria. Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom has welcomed the report of the Joint

Investigatory Mechanism, which recently determined unequivocally that Syrian forces was responsible for at least two attacks with chemical weapons, and that Da'esh is accountable for at least one such attack. The Minister called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. Sweden, which contributed both financially and technically to the work of the Joint Investigatory Mechanism, will continue to follow this issue closely as member of the OPCW Executive Council.

Mr. Chairman,

We need to move further and faster in all aspects of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation. It is the sincere wish of my Government that deliberations held in the First Committee will make a true difference. We believe in multilateralism and international cooperation. We look forward to working with all delegations and are ready to do our part.