



Opening Remarks of Sweden at the IPNDV Annual Plenary Meeting Sydney, Australia - December 5, 2022

Delivered by Dr. Jens Wirstam

Thank you, mister chair.

Let me begin by thanking the IPNDV Secretariat for your leadership in our joint work, as well as our Australian hosts. It is a true pleasure to finally be here in Sydney, jetlag notwithstanding.

I would like to start by looking a bit beyond the immediate issues we will discuss in the next coming days. On February 24th this year, an already challenging international security environment deteriorated dramatically. Apart from the devastating direct consequences for the brave people of Ukraine, Russia's illegal aggression on Ukraine has also had severe impacts on the global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, consequences that may not yet be fully assessable.

It was against this backdrop that the long overdue 10th NPT Review Conference finally took place in August, representing a crucial opportunity to ensure implementation of commitments.

It is deeply regrettable that, due to one country – Russia - blocking consensus, the Conference was not able to adopt a final outcome document. While by no means perfect, the draft outcome document of the Conference would have given important impetus for progress and follow-up on several issues, including nuclear risk reduction.

Progress on article VI of the Treaty is urgent. The continued polarization and distrust between countries, coupled with the erosion of the global arms control architecture in recent years, have made the need for constructive, forward-looking efforts on nuclear disarmament all the more pressing.

In this context, the work we are doing here, within the IPNDV, cannot be understated. Apart from offering concrete ideas and solutions to multilateral verification of the disarmament of nuclear arsenals, the Partnership plays a major role in promoting dialogue between Nuclear Weapon States and Non-Nuclear Weapon States. Our work also focuses on what we can do rather than what we cannot do. All of this is, of course, invaluable in a situation like the one we find ourselves in today.

As a member of IPNDV since the beginning, including as Co-Chair of the technology group, Sweden believes that these points represent some of the primary added value of the Initiative. We also appreciate the broad participation within the IPNDV, allowing for valuable, multidimensional discussions between technical experts, academia, and diplomats.





We reiterate our support for the Programme of Work for Phase III and the vision for the path ahead. Our slogan - “from paper to practice” - should continue to guide our work to ensure the further testing and refinement of our concepts and ideas, building on lessons learned. In this regard, table-top exercises fill an important function.

At the same time, we support the proposal by the Netherlands and Germany, that discussions about strategic and conceptual problems encountered in earlier phases need to be continued. Further exploration of such issues could also lay the ground for future exercises.

As you may know, Sweden has applied for membership in NATO, and we fully adhere to NATO’s doctrines and policies. As an ally, Sweden will continue its long-standing engagement for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, not the least the verification aspects.

Finally, Sweden is also a member of the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, as well as of the recently established Group of Governmental Experts. In addition, we also promote nuclear disarmament verification as part of our efforts in the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament, with the broader aim to create political support for a pragmatic, results-oriented agenda for implementation of disarmament commitments.

Working to solve challenges related to effective nuclear disarmament verification is one of the most concrete efforts towards realising our goal of a world without nuclear weapons. While it may be difficult to envisage effective disarmament in the current global security environment, it also renders our work all the more important.

Thank you.

