

German Statement
Negative Security Assurances
Thematic debate
Geneva, 09 February 2023

Mr. President,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement [which will be] delivered by Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

Negative Security Assurances have traditionally been an undisputed, long standing item on the CD Agenda with discussions on the issue evolving over time.

During last year's subsidiary body on "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", we had the opportunity to discuss the current state of NSA in depth under the able leadership of our Indonesian colleague. In 2017 and 2018, Germany had the honor to chair working groups and subsidiary bodies that dealt with the subject of Negative Security Assurances as well. Discussions converged on a number of undisputed commonalities, despite the fact that these bodies were unable to adopt final consensus reports.

Let me briefly revert to those commonalities, as I am convinced that these can serve as a good basis and inspiration for our thematic debate as well.

- Delegations acknowledged the positive effect of NSA on the policies of non-nuclear weapon states not to aspire, develop, acquire or possess

nuclear weapons and thus on the non-proliferation regime and disarmament in general.

- NSA were seen as possible practical steps contributing to overall and general global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, not constituting an end in itself but rather a pragmatic step to the final goal of a world without nuclear weapons.
- States noted that NSA could act to reinforce and strengthen other disarmament instruments and measures.
- States considered the CD as the most appropriate forum to discuss NSA and their context.

This reiteration and the discussions during last year's subsidiary body on the topic show that there already is a broad agreement on NSA. However, trust and a rules-based approach to global affairs by *all* nuclear weapon States are essential for NSAs to gain oxygen.

With its premeditated, unprovoked and unjustifiable aggression against Ukraine, Russia has grossly and once again violated her own security assurances given to Ukraine, as outlined in the Budapest memorandum, in exchange for returning nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union. This blatant disregard damages not only Russia's credibility as a responsible nuclear weapon state. It also severely challenges the concept of negative security assurances as such.

Against this background, we continue to call out Russia's violations as unacceptable. The normative acquis against the use of nuclear weapons, with NSA at its core, must be defended.

Germany continues to believe that NSA can serve as an important intermediary step on the way towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

They have played a confidence-building role in the past and they constitute a concrete element of a step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament in the future. Germany has therefore consistently advocated to consolidate and tighten NSA. We continue to value good faith NSAs as stepping stones to revitalize nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

Looking ahead, our task remains to come up with concrete and practical steps to prepare the ground and advance nuclear disarmament as spelled out in the stepping stones of the Stockholm Initiative. We need to show that Article VI matters in practical terms. Good faith NSAs are an important element besides progress in negotiations on an FMCT, an early entry into force of the CTBT and the strengthening of NWFZ.

Thank you, Mr. President.