

United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC)

Joint Nordic statement

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Mr. Tor Henrik Andersen

UNHQ New York, 7 April 2025

Chair,

I will deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country Norway.

Let me at the outset offer our full support to your chairmanship and express our strong satisfaction with your leadership over the 2024 session of the Disarmament Commission. For several years this body has been facing different challenges, but last year marked a new beginning.

Building on last year's efforts, which showed that progress is possible also in demanding geopolitical circumstances, we must make the most of this UNDC cycle to deliver on its mandate. There is room for convergence – if we keep our focus on the elements where we can agree and make progress.

Chair,

We have before us the two working groups on “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons” and “Recommendations on common understandings related to emerging technologies in the context of international security”.

We regard the paper from the chair of WG1 of 18 April 2024¹ as a good foundation for this year's WG1. We fully subscribe to the *principles and objectives* as set out in the paper. We stress the role of the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and would like to highlight in this regard the importance of the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency.

The Nordic countries underscore the importance of efforts to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons use, considering the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples. Taking concrete steps to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict – “risk reduction” – is a matter of urgency, and all states have an interest in and a capability to contribute, while nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-possessing States outside the NPT bear a special responsibility in this area. We note the upcoming establishment of a scientific UN panel

¹ A/CN.10/2024/WG.I/CRP.1/Rev.2

on the consequences of nuclear war. Negative Security Assurances (NSA) can serve as a confidence-building measure and decrease tension whilst nuclear weapons still exist. This is a topic that should be further explored by WG1.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a key role in the nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament regime, both through verifying states' compliance with their non-proliferation obligations, and the facilitation of peaceful uses in accordance with Article IV in the NPT, to support the sustainable development goals.

Chair,

In line with these considerations, we would like to suggest the following topics for discussion at WG 1:

- The role and meaning of the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including their interconnectedness.
- Measures to reduce the risks of use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.
- All relevant aspects of Negative Security Assurances.
- The contribution of peaceful uses to the SDGs, per the NPT, including the role of the IAEA.

We underline that all these discussions should always include perspectives on capacity building, gender and diversity.

Chair,

The discussions on Emerging Technologies (ET) in WG2 last year were substantive and wide-ranging per the Chair's summary. They illustrated how broad the concept of emerging technologies is, and how ETs have an impact on virtually all the disarmament files – both in terms of opportunities and risks.

The Nordic countries believe that the UNDC is well-placed to elaborate some overarching principles regarding the development and use of ETs, including the risks posed by their misuse.

We noted broad agreement last year that ETs do not exist in a legal and normative vacuum, but that international law, including International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights Law, apply to such technologies as well. We also noted broad agreement on the centrality of meaningful human control, accountability and responsibility over the development and use of ETs, especially in the military domain. In this regard, we much welcome the agreement between the US and China last November, affirming that decisions regarding nuclear weapons should remain under human control.

Chair,

Last year's discussions provided us with a good overview. This year we need to narrow the scope. There was broad agreement last year that the UNDC should strive for complementarity and avoid duplication of other concurrent processes. We agree. For outer space, the newly established OEWG provides the most suitable forum for addressing space related security implications of ET. In relation to biology and life sciences, we have the Working Group to strengthen the BWC.

Productive discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems are already underway in the Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). They are, however, narrowly focused on weapons systems. There is room, we believe, for complementary discussions in WG2 on the broader military applications of autonomy and Artificial Intelligence.

The Nordic countries believe peaceful uses of emerging technology also merit focus in our discussions. As set out in the Pact for the Future, we are committed to enhance international cooperation and capacity-building efforts to bridge the digital divides and ensure that all States can safely and securely seize the benefits of digital technologies; and we remain committed to manage dual-use concerns in a way that promotes international cooperation and development.

We would also like to underscore the importance of an inclusive multistakeholder approach to these deliberations. We must ensure engagement and commitment from the private sector, civil society and all other relevant stakeholders. In this regard, we much welcome the recent UNIDIR Global Conference on AI, Security and Ethics.

In line with these considerations, we would like to suggest the following topics for discussion at WG 2:

- General principles for the development and use of ET in security-related domains.
- Military applications of autonomy and artificial intelligence beyond the scope of lethal autonomous weapons systems.
- Promoting peaceful uses of ET and managing dual-use concerns in a manner that promotes international security, cooperation and development.
- Capacity and knowledge building, including sharing of best practices.

Chair

The UNDC was set up as a deliberative body and mandated to consider and make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament. Let's act on this mandate and make concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

Thank you.