

STEPPING UP EFFORTS: TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL REVIEW CYCLE

Working Paper submitted by the members of the Stockholm Initiative for nuclear disarmament (Argentina, Canada, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland)

1. We all share the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and reaffirm that nuclear weapons should never be used again. We underline the need to advance nuclear disarmament and arms control and to implement obligations and commitments under the NPT.
2. We reaffirm our unequivocal support of the NPT and its three mutually reinforcing pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. We remain unwavering in our commitment to advancing nuclear disarmament under the NPT in accordance with the treaty obligations. Our strong concerns over the deteriorating international security environment and continuing violations of international law, including the principles of the UN Charter, as well as irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, make it ever more important to continue and enhance efforts to achieve our collective goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.
3. The Stockholm Initiative has focused on making disarmament recommendations that, if implemented, will reduce international tension, improve global security, and promote confidence between States. We underline that past NPT commitments, including the “13 Steps” of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the “64-Point Action Plan” of the 2010 NPT Review Conference remain valid, and form the basis for making further progress in fully implementing the Treaty and achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Commitments must be implemented, and obligations must be met. Previous proposals by the Stockholm Initiative, in particular the “Stepping Stones for Advancing Nuclear Disarmament” and the “Nuclear Risk Reduction Package”, remain central and valid contributions.
4. This working paper builds on the “Chair’s Reflections” from the current Review Cycle’s first session of the Preparatory Committee and the main disarmament issues for the current Review Cycle mentioned therein. Proposals on these issues are mainly taken from the “Stepping Stones for Advancing Nuclear Disarmament” of the Stockholm Initiative from 2020.
5. To promote international stability, peace, and enhanced security for all, it is crucial to limit the salience of nuclear weapons and spare no effort to return to the path of nuclear disarmament, while taking into account the current international security challenges.
6. Negative security assurances and nuclear-weapons free zones enhance global and regional peace and security and contribute to advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Many non-nuclear-weapon States have long been calling for legally binding negative security assurances.
7. Given the deteriorating security environment and erosion of the disarmament and arms control architecture, the Stockholm Initiative remains convinced of the need to work on nuclear risk reduction to urgently mitigate risks related to nuclear weapons. Risk

reduction measures are not a substitute for disarmament, but rather a complement to ongoing disarmament efforts and advocacy.

8. The Stockholm Initiative considers it important to continue to raise awareness of the impact of nuclear weapons use and testing, and to engage with those who have suffered from the use or the testing of nuclear weapons.
9. In 2023, the first session of the Preparatory Committee and the Working Group on Strengthening the Review Process once more highlighted the importance attributed to enhancing transparency and accountability in implementing Article VI of the NPT and disarmament-related commitments.
10. The Stockholm Initiative welcomed the constructive debates and concrete proposals of the Working Group on Strengthening the Review Process in July 2023, which demonstrated political will and serious engagement of the broader NPT community in efforts to improve the implementation of the Treaty.
11. Capacity building and disarmament education of youth as well as bringing different views and approaches of young people to the table are crucial for advancing disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are important cross-cutting priorities for the Stockholm Initiative. We emphasize the need to facilitate and increase the participation of women in all aspects of disarmament, including decision making.

The Stockholm Initiative submits the following options and recommendations to the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference, with the aim of strengthening the implementation of Art. VI and towards a successful review cycle:

I. Disarmament, arms control and strategic stability

- Strict adherence of all States to obligations and commitments made within the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation framework.
- Nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm their commitment to ensure that nuclear weapons will never be used again and to reduce and eliminate all types of their nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon States to acknowledge their special responsibility to fulfill their disarmament obligations under the Treaty.
- Acknowledge the importance and contribution of the New START treaty to international stability and nuclear disarmament, and urge all necessary steps be taken to return to and maintain full implementation of the New START treaty.
- The United States and Russia to negotiate a follow-on treaty to New START or a new nuclear arms control arrangement/treaty without delay with the aim of progress towards deeper, irreversible and verifiable reductions in their nuclear arsenals, including deployed and non-deployed: nuclear warheads of any yield, and strategic and non-strategic delivery vehicles.
- Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons: Work towards tangible progress in launching long-overdue negotiations without any preconditions, on a treaty prohibiting fissile material production for use in nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon States to show leadership in moving toward such negotiations. Nuclear-weapon States to uphold or declare moratoria on the production of such fissile material. As per UNGA 78 Resolution “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”, States that produce or possess fissile material for nuclear weapons to engage in transparency and confidence-building measures among themselves, with facilitation support from the UN where helpful.

- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT): All States, especially the Annex II States, that have not yet done so, to ratify the CTBT and Russia to renew its ratification of the CTBT. Nuclear-weapon States to uphold existing moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion. All States to enhance efforts towards the long overdue entry into force of the CTBT, through sustained advocacy aimed at, and genuine engagement by, the States whose ratification is required. All States continue to provide political, technical and/or financial support to further strengthen the International Monitoring Systems and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Nuclear-weapon States to increase test-site transparency measures to ensure adherence to zero-yield standard.
- Nuclear disarmament verification: Support ongoing multilateral work, including by cooperation of nuclear-weapon States with non-nuclear-weapon States, to advance nuclear disarmament verification on a conceptual basis, by developing technical capacities and by considering the use of new technologies for strengthening means of verification with the aim to prepare States for future disarmament negotiations and verification arrangements, without being an obstacle to disarmament.
- Irreversibility in nuclear disarmament: Support the multilateral dialogue on irreversibility in nuclear disarmament with the aim of building a common recognition of the importance of applying irreversibility measures in achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons. Encourage the exchange of information on the application of the principle of irreversibility in national reports and statements, especially by the nuclear-weapons States. Continue to engage experts on the irreversibility in nuclear disarmament, and learn from other regimes on the principle of irreversibility from the political, legal and technical perspectives.

II. Reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines

- Nuclear-weapon States, collectively or individually, to discuss and overcome obstacles to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in their policies and doctrines.
- Include all categories of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in disarmament and arms control processes.
- All States to reaffirm the urgency for all nuclear-weapon States to further diminishing and ultimately eliminating the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, in promotion of international stability, peace and undiminished and increased security for all.

III. Negative security assurances, including in the context of nuclear-weapons free zones

- All States to explore ways in which negative security assurances could be strengthened, including through an internationally legally binding instrument, in order to contribute to building confidence in the non-proliferation regime and to progress in nuclear disarmament.
- Nuclear-weapon States, collectively or individually, to tighten negative security assurances, including through signature and ratification of the remaining protocols to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapons free zones.
- While the necessary action by nuclear-weapon States to ensure the finalization of the legal status of all protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties is critical, equally carry forward substantive discussion with a view to elaborating recommendations on a universal legally-binding instrument on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States that are in compliance with their NPT obligations.
- Nuclear-weapon States, collectively or individually, include, in their Implementation Reports, efforts to provide negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

IV. Measure to prevent the use of nuclear weapons: Risk Reduction

- Nuclear-weapon States to implement or innovate risk reduction measures such as crisis communication (hotlines, risk reduction centres) to reduce the risk of the use of nuclear weapons, whether intentionally, by miscalculation, miscommunication, misperception, or accident in the context of achieving nuclear disarmament, and deepen the exchange on nuclear doctrine and declaratory policies as well as on nuclear risks.
- All States to engage in a structured dialogue on the impact of emerging disruptive technologies including artificial intelligence, and the cyber and outer space domains on nuclear risks and strategic stability, but also on how to use new technologies to mitigate risks.

V. Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including measures aimed at victim assistance and environmental remediation

- All States to commit to engaging in dialogue on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, and the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.
- All States to assist in building and disseminating knowledge and understanding of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear-weapons use and testing, impact on victims and on the environment with a particular view on the gendered impact on humans.
- All States to encourage visits to communities affected by nuclear weapons, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and former nuclear test sites such as Semipalatinsk and in the Pacific, and interaction with affected people, including the *hibakusha*, those who have suffered the use of nuclear weapons irrespective of their nationalities and origins.
- All States to take note of the 78th UNGA Resolution “Addressing the Legacy of Nuclear Weapons: Providing Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation to Member States Affected by the Use or Testing of Nuclear Weapons”, sponsored by Kazakhstan and Kiribati.

VI. Accountability for the implementation of disarmament commitments and transparency for steps taken in that regard

- Nuclear-weapon States that have yet to do so to enhance transparency on arsenals and doctrines, and report to NPT States Parties on arsenals and plans for their expansion and/or modernization on a regular basis.
- Each nuclear-weapon State to submit its NPT implementation reports at least twice in every review cycle at appropriate intervals to allow for substantive discussion, on the basis of a standardized reporting form.
- All Parties to the NPT to report on their implementation of obligations and commitments under the NPT using a standardized reporting format, as for instance proposed by the NPDI (Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative), and to support proposals to strengthen reporting and transparency commitments.
- All States to strengthen accountability for the implementation of disarmament commitments.

VII. Further strengthening the review process

- All States to commit to enhancing the NPT review cycle to improve the NPT's implementation in all its aspects.

- All States to commit to continue the work of the Working Group on Strengthening the Review Process, including taking into consideration the proposals on strengthening transparency and accountability made during the 2023 meeting of the Working Group.

VIII. Cross-cutting issues: Engage with young generations and full participation

- All States to engage with young generations on the importance of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including through dialogue platforms, school outreach, mentoring, internships, fellowships, funding, scholarships, model events and youth group activities.
- All States to ensure the full and effective participation of women and to further integrate gender perspectives in all aspects of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation decision-making processes.
- All States to actively enhance the role of women in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by increasing prominence of discussions and studies on the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons and prioritizing the perspectives of marginalized and vulnerable people groups in the NPT Review Cycle.
- All States to seek gender balance in their delegations to NPT-related meetings, ensuring women are not just present in the room, but are also empowered to shape discussions and policy.