

Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Steps to strengthen negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States

**Working paper submitted by the members of the Stockholm
Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament (Canada, Ethiopia, Finland,
Germany, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Netherlands (Kingdom of
the), Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden
and Switzerland)**

1. We, the members of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, reaffirm our unequivocal support of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its three mutually reinforcing pillars: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. We remain unwavering in our commitment to advancing nuclear disarmament under the Treaty in accordance with the Treaty obligations. We all share the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.
2. Previous Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments, including the decisions of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 13 steps of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the 64-point action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, remain valid and form the basis for making further progress in fully implementing the Treaty. Obligations must be honoured, and commitments must be implemented. The reflections of the Chair of the first session of the Preparatory Committee in the current review cycle, as well as the Chair's summary and reflections of the Chair of the second session of the Preparatory Committee, remain important contributions in advancing the discussions leading up to the 2026 Review Conference.
3. Previous proposals by the Stockholm Initiative, in particular "Stepping stones for advancing nuclear disarmament", "A nuclear risk reduction package" and "Stepping up efforts: towards a successful review cycle", describe both the Initiative's baselines, as well as priority areas going forward, and remain central and valid contributions.
4. We are extremely concerned over the deteriorating international security environment and continuing violations of international law, including the principles



of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as irresponsible nuclear rhetoric. This makes it ever more important to continue and enhance efforts to achieve our collective goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

5. Recognizing that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination, we welcome the January 2022 joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. It is the responsibility of all five nuclear-weapon States to abide by that statement.

6. We stress the importance of negative security assurances given by the nuclear-weapon States. Existing negative security assurances should be fully adhered to and thus enhance global and regional peace and security and contribute to advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We stress the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in receiving negative security assurances from nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

7. Under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, States have an inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. The right to self-defence of the attacked State must under no circumstances be used as a pretext for not abiding by existing negative security assurances.

8. Negative security assurances serve as a concrete element on the way to a world free of nuclear weapons. They have played an important role in assuring the accession and adherence of States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and in facilitating the indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995. As such, existing negative security assurances have proved an important instrument in strengthening the adherence of States Parties to the Treaty to Treaty obligations with respect to non-proliferation and have contributed to strengthening overall confidence in the global non-proliferation regime.

9. We recall the existing conditional or unconditional security assurances given by nuclear-weapon States in their statements referred to in Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [984 \(1995\)](#), [1887 \(2009\)](#) and [2310 \(2016\)](#). We further recall actions 7 and 8 of the final document of the 2010 Review Conference calling for the Conference of Disarmament to begin discussions of effective international arrangements on negative security assurances and all nuclear-weapon States to commit to fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances.

10. We welcome the 2025 decision by the Conference on Disarmament to establish subsidiary bodies to advance the substantive work on all agenda items, including the issue of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, in a comprehensive and balanced manner. We support the Conference on Disarmament in advancing and accomplishing this important task, including by reviving the discussions at the meetings of the States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty under the current review cycle of the Treaty.

11. We emphasize the importance of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, underline the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where appropriate and where they do not exist, and reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at and in line with the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference.

12. We stress that negative security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States in connection to the nuclear-weapon-free zones treaties should be fully adhered to, and

we encourage concerned States to review any related reservations, as well as to ratify outstanding protocols to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

13. We deplore any violation of any given negative security assurances. A breach of an assurance has a significant negative impact on trust in international security arrangements.

14. Out of concern for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, the Stockholm Initiative submits the following recommendations to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference in the shared interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in reaffirmed and strengthened negative security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States.

Recommendations

15. **Reaffirm negative security assurances as a priority.** Reaffirm the importance of negative security assurances as one of the highest-priority issues at the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other relevant forums, and emphasize the role of negative security assurances in strengthening the non-proliferation regime, as a risk reduction measure and for advancing nuclear disarmament.

16. **Reaffirm existing negative security assurances.** Nuclear-weapon States should reaffirm existing negative security assurances given in their statements referred to, inter alia, in Security Council resolution [984 \(1995\)](#).

17. **Explore effective international arrangements to strengthen and formalize negative security assurances.** All States should explore ways to further strengthen negative security assurances, including through 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 Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations, such as in the relevant subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament. Nuclear-weapon States, collectively or individually, should explore ways, nationally and multilaterally, to strengthen negative security assurances, such as through legally binding arrangements.

18. **Sign and ratify protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.** Nuclear-weapon States should make every effort to sign and ratify the remaining protocols to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and to engage in a constructive dialogue on how to remove any reservations to the nuclear-weapon-free zone protocols to enable the full benefit of those treaties to their States Parties.

19. **Report on progress and exchange with non-nuclear-weapon States.** Nuclear-weapon States should report on and update in their respective national implementation reports their efforts and measures taken to strengthen the negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, and should work towards a legally binding negative security assurances instrument, as outlined in action 7 of the 64-point action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. They should enter into a dialogue with non-nuclear-weapon States on these efforts.

20. **Address emerging technologies.** Nuclear-weapon States should specify and clarify, to the fullest extent possible, the potential implications of new and emerging technologies for existing negative security assurances.