

Statement by the

**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia**

**H. E. Tanja Fajon**

at the

**Meeting of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament**

New York, 2 August 2022

Madame Chairpersons,

It is a great pleasure to participate at the meeting of the Stockholm initiative for nuclear disarmament. We are honored to become one of its aligned states.

The Slovenian Government decided to support the initiative for a number of reasons. The most important were its role in ensuring further progress in the implementation of the Treaty and achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, through the promotion of concrete and pragmatic steps. Slovenia therefore also aligned itself with the Working Paper entitled "A Nuclear Risk Reduction Package".

The Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is taking place in a very difficult and complex security environment. This is due to Russia's brutal war in Ukraine and President Putin's threat of nuclear weapons use. This is unacceptable and represents a serious step back for the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Our expectations regarding the final outcome of the Review Conference remain modest. Russia’s unprovoked aggression against Ukraine will undoubtedly affect the general atmosphere. It is thus critical not to allow the Russian unacceptable behavior to be swept under the rug. Russia should also be condemned for its escalatory rhetoric that undermines the efforts to make progress on disarmament.

It is still a priority for Slovenia to ensure a meaningful outcome of the Review Conference. In this context, it will be important that we focus on shared interests among all States Parties and try to find common ground to strengthen the authority of the Treaty across its three pillars. This also includes the area of nuclear disarmament. I believe that current security dynamics call for stronger, not weaker application of international law, norms and institutions.

I would like to reaffirm my country's readiness to work closely with all of you during the Conference to advance realistic and achievable objectives in the area of nuclear disarmament. In this relation, the "stepping stones" approach is a truly valuable proposal since its offers practical solutions for reducing current international tensions and nuclear risks, as well as renewing trust among States Parties.

I would also like to assure you that Slovenia stands ready to engage with the rest of the group in reaching out to other NPT States Parties and secure additional support.

Thank you.