

**Statement to be delivered by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries at the 57th
Session of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Nordic countries align themselves with the statement delivered by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union and would like to make the following remarks in our national capacities.

Mr. Chair,

2. Let me begin by assuring you, Ambassador Sramek, of our continuing support and cooperation. We would like to congratulate you and your team on the excellent way that you've been managing the work of the PrepCom throughout the year.
3. The Nordic countries attach great importance to the CTBT and the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions. As this year marks the 25th anniversary of the CTBT, we want to reiterate that the entry into force of the treaty remains a top priority in the overall field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At the Article XIV Conference in September, our Ministers in their statements urged the remaining Annex 2 States to sign and ratify the CTBT, so that the Treaty may formally enter into force. We welcome the positive statements made by other States in that regard. This will remain a priority in connection with the up-coming NPT Review Conference. We trust that the importance of the CTBT will be recognized in the deliberations of the Review Conference. We applaud Dr. Floyd's renewed efforts in promoting the universalisation of the CTBT and stand ready to support him in this regard. We also welcome his commitment to a continued focus on gender issues, including on advancing gender equality at the PTS.

Mr. Chair

4. As this is the first meeting of the PrepCom with Dr. Robert Floyd as our Executive Secretary, we would like, once again, to welcome his appointment, and express our full support for his ambition to revitalize and modernize the management of the Provisional Technical Secretariat. We believe it is within the mandate of the Executive Secretary to take appropriate actions aimed at ensuring the effective and smooth functioning of the PTS. In this regard, the Nordic countries support the proposed establishment of a Chief of Cabinet position in the Office of the Executive Secretary. Taking into consideration the detailed information provided by the Secretariat on numerous occasions on this matter, we look forward to taking an early consensus decision on this issue.
5. With regard to appointments and elections, the Nordic countries reaffirm our support for the candidacy of Ms. Rashmi Rajyaguru, of the United Kingdom, to serve as the new Chair of the Advisory Group. Ms. Rajyaguru is the only candidate. As a seasoned accountant, manager, and financial expert, she is highly qualified for the position. Her appointment would mean that a woman for the first time serves in this role. We want to emphasize that the Advisory Group is a technical body and that appointments should be based on factors such as commitment, merit, technical expertise, and professionalism. We must avoid any attempt to politicize the process. Moreover, any discussions about future appointment modalities must not be allowed to delay or impede pending appointments.

6. Moving to other issues on our agenda, we thank Ambassador Molekane of South Africa and Ambassador Laggner of Switzerland for their excellent non-paper on the importance of mobile gas background measurements. The Nordic countries reiterate our position that such measurements are a scientific necessity in order to maximize the effectiveness of the verification regime in detecting a nuclear test explosion. This is the core mission of the CTBTO and thus falls well within the mandate of the organization. With this in mind, we encourage the PTS to continue carrying out such studies as they see fit.

Mr. Chair,

7. It has now been almost two years since we were last able to have detailed, substantive discussions on an expert level on technical matters related to the verification system. Given the technical nature of the CTBTO, expert meetings are essential to maintain the effectiveness and credibility of the regime. Further postponement of these meetings leaves us unable to address several outstanding issues which require our urgent attention. In view of this, the Nordic countries look forward to having expert group meetings during the next session of Working Group B, as discussed earlier this week. We thank Dr. Batyrbekov and the PTS for their facilitation.
8. In conclusion, we take note of the reports of Working Group A and B, as well as of the Advisory Group, and support the recommendations contained therein.

Thank you, Mr. Chair