



Sri Lanka Statement at the Plenary of the Conference on Disarmament 26 January 2021

Mr President,

At the outset the delegation of Sri Lanka wishes to congratulate you on your assumption of the first Presidency of the 2021 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Our delegation assures you and other P6 Presidents of its full support and cooperation to find common grounds for fulfilling CD's obligations towards strengthening international peace and security. We are encouraged by the approach of the six presidencies working together as a team in this regard. We also thank the Secretary General of the CD and the CD Secretariat for their support.

Sri Lanka aligns itself with the statement of G21 delivered by Indonesia.

Mr. President, our delegation notes with appreciation the package proposal presented by you on behalf of the six Presidents. We affirm our full support for your efforts to develop this package through a consultative process and reach consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work with a view to resuming multilateral disarmament negotiations, which we have failed to achieve for far too long.

Sri Lanka has been an active player in the field of disarmament for long years. We are pleased to recall that Sri Lanka's presidency of the CD in 2018 was able to once again make a meaningful contribution to this process through the adoption of the decision CD/2119 in February 2018. We take this opportunity to urge all members of the Conference to work with renewed commitment and a sense of urgency demonstrating maximum flexibility, to support the efforts of the six Presidents of the Conference in 2021.

As we are fully aware, the year 2021 presents unprecedented challenges for all of us as the world continues to fight against a deadly pandemic. This situation brings home the most pertinent question of whether a security regime based only on exotic weapons is the best measure to achieve sustainable human security.

We are concerned of the rapidly deteriorating international arms control and security regime which would have a profound impact on humankind that would endure the pandemic itself bringing in our vulnerabilities to heightened realities. We also note with concern the lack of progress on the NPT and the inability of states to work together to advance non-proliferation goals of the Treaty as we are on the run up to the tenth review conference of the Treaty this year. Modernization of nuclear arsenals as well as a move, by some states, to include new "low-yield nuclear weapons" in their national security strategies and postures are of grave concern. It appears that nuclear possessing states, instead of implementing coordinated measures to abandon their nuclear weapons arsenal are moving more towards expansion and modernization. Advancement of autonomous weapon systems and related emerging technologies devoid of meaningful human control also remains a matter of grave concern. Early commencement of

negotiation of binding limitations and regulations of such weapon systems are an absolute necessity. We note the importance of continuing serious dialogue in good faith among all parties concerned in the interest of international peace and security of all peoples.

However, we remain hopeful that our collective efforts would lead to concrete results and that we would continue to build on the positive work we have achieved so far as we endeavor to understand the legitimate security concerns of all states and how we could narrow our differences.

We sincerely hope, Mr. President, that your 'inclusive' approach and willingness to engage across regional groups will assist to gather momentum for the work ahead. It is our earnest hope that the Conference will be able to untie its gordian knot at least this year so that we could decide how best we could utilize our meager resources to optimum advantage in the best interests of the human kind.

I thank you Mr. President.