



**Statement by Honorable H.M. Vijitha Herath, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign
Employment and Tourism of Sri Lanka**

**High Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament
23-25 February 2026**

Madam Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament

Mr. President

Excellencies

Distinguished delegates

I would like to begin by offering my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Omar Zniber, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco, on assuming the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for 2026. Please be assured of Sri Lanka's fullest support and cooperation as you work towards a successful term.

I also wish to extend my appreciation to Mongolia for its leadership as the first President of the Conference this year. Furthermore, I wish to extend my best wishes and the continued support of Sri Lanka to the incoming Presidents for 2026; the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, and Pakistan as they strive to achieve our shared objectives during this year.

Mr. President,

In light of the current global landscape, it has become increasingly evident that enduring peace and security are of vital importance for all. The prevailing geopolitical tensions have unfortunately created a stalemate in multilateral disarmament efforts while posing significant challenges to International Humanitarian Law.

To safeguard the future of humanity, our collective action must be treated as an utmost priority. Building trust and mutual respect remains the essential foundation for effective, collective decision-making at multilateral fora. Our goal must remain steadfast to ensure a secure and stable world for future generations.

Mr. President,

In this regard, I am proud to recall Sri Lanka's active role in global disarmament efforts, as a developing island nation from the Global South. It is my firm belief that the shared responsibility and unwavering commitment of each Member State, regardless of their size, remains critical in achieving the goals of the global disarmament agenda. Such cooperation is essential to advancing the best interests of humanity while ensuring a more secure future for all.

As a long-standing and credible partner in the global nuclear disarmament agenda, dating back to the 1960s, Sri Lanka remains a pioneering supporter of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs). In the current global context, I wish to recall Sri Lanka's significant contribution to the declaration issued at the 1964 NAM Summit in Cairo, which called for the establishment of "denuclearized zones." We continue to strongly support and call for a tangible way forward in establishing these zones, particularly in the Middle East.

While noting that total elimination and non-proliferation remain the only guarantees against the use of nuclear weapons, Sri Lanka urges that the legitimate expectation of non-nuclear-weapon states to receive unconditional, non-discriminatory, and legally binding Negative Security Assurances (NSAs) be guaranteed through the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Looking ahead, I see that the year 2026 brings together key opportunities in terms of nuclear disarmament, including the Eleventh Review Conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and the First Review Conference of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

I wish the incoming presidents of the NPT and TPNW Review Conferences; Vietnam and South Africa, respectively, the strength to lead these important dialogues toward successful outcomes for the sake of humanity. I hope their efforts receive a wide global support despite the increasing challenges.

On humanitarian disarmament, Sri Lanka continues to be an active partner in humanitarian demining and currently serves as a senior member of the Victim Assistance Committee of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). We also remain committed to the Cluster Munitions Convention (CCM), of which Sri Lanka held the presidency in 2019.

I also take this opportunity to express Sri Lanka's fullest support to the Lao People's Democratic Republic for its leadership as the incoming President of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka is cognizant of the impact of emerging technologies which have already changed the face of the current global disarmament architecture while putting International Humanitarian Law at a grave risk. In this current context, Sri Lanka has been advocating for the early commencement of negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). We believe that the outcome of the Seventh Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to be held later this year would be of vital importance in addressing the challenges posed by Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).

Similarly, while identifying the growing threats to outer space security from the rapid advancements in space technologies, Sri Lanka as a long-standing partner in outer space disarmament, continues to support the negotiation of a legally binding instrument preventing an arms race in outer space.

As a nation that championed the First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-1) in 1978 and as strong supporter of the establishment of this Conference, Sri Lanka believes that the relevance of the CD must be reaffirmed as a vital forum for rebuilding trust among nations. We call for a renewed multilateralism to strengthen the mandate of this body as the single multilateral negotiating forum for global disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that Sri Lanka stands ready to work with all nations to ensure that global efforts to secure a safer world for our future generations are pursued vigorously and realized at the earliest possible.

Thank you.