



Statement

by

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Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

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At the outset let me express the deepest condolences of the people and the government of Sri Lanka to the people of Nepal affected by the recent earthquake. The government of Sri Lanka has actively engaged in the international relief efforts in Nepal. We are confident that the traditional resilience of the people of Nepal together with the spirit of solidarity and goodwill of the international community will help the rebuilding efforts of the government of Nepal.

We extend warm felicitations to Ambassador Taous Feroukhi and members of the Bureau. I'm confident that Ambassador Feroukhi's commitment to the cause of disarmament and her long experience as Permanent Representative of Algeria to IAEA in Vienna will contribute in bringing our deliberations to a fruitful conclusion.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Today, we gather five years after the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It is a moment for sober reflection. It is also a moment to chart a way forward avoiding the pitfalls of the past, and to grasp the reality of the emerging world order. A fundamental shift in the mindset of reliance on nuclear disarmament is essential if we are to achieve the 3 pillars of the NPT namely nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This Review Conference is the test of our collective resolve and goodwill to strive towards realizing a world, free of nuclear weapons and other forms of weapons of mass destruction.

The 2010 outcome was then hailed as a ground-breaking deal in the nuclear non-proliferation discourse. However, as our experiences in the recent years have demonstrated, the aftermath of the 2010 Conference proved no different from previous review conferences that have preceded. It was ironical that the promise in some of the most important areas agreed to in 2010 has given way to skepticism, with mixed results in some areas and no progress in many others.

Progress on Nuclear disarmament, the central component of the treaty regime, has been stalled for several years with no effective action taken to follow it through to success, despite pious exhortations. The “peaceful uses” concept has had to face many an obstacle in its path towards practical realization in many developing countries. The promise of non-proliferation itself was observed in the breach, with one or two regions specifically moving in the opposite direction.

This stalemate cannot continue. Its continuance can only be at the expense of collective security of humanity. New and emerging conflicts have the potential risk of jeopardizing human civilizations.

As a country which has always stood at the forefront of regional and global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, Sri Lanka believes that the need for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction is now more urgent than ever. We cannot continue with business as usual approach, convening every five years a review conference in New York and unwinding in between, all that was agreed. We would like to take this opportunity to reassure the global community that Sri

Lanka remains committed to striving with all States and other Stakeholders, to make nuclear disarmament realizable and bring peaceful uses of nuclear technology within reach. As with other countries which are party to the NPT, we consider that we have an inalienable right to peaceful use of nuclear technology as provided for in Article IV of the NPT. Equally, there is a shared responsibility to work towards eventual elimination of nuclear weapons as provided for Article VI of the NPT. It is regrettable that the obligation to negotiate in good faith to achieve the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons remains largely unfulfilled despite the 1996 Advisory opinion of the ICJ.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference, conscious of the challenges facing both State parties to NPT as well as non-parties and recognizing the symbiotic link between nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, had agreed, as a realistic way out on a set of practical steps to achieve progress. NPT Review Conference in 2010 reiterated the importance of these practical steps and urged their expeditious implementation on a priority basis. Ten years after their adoption, these 13 practical steps remain largely unrealized, and progress in the broad areas covered by some of these steps, if any, is limited.

Sri Lanka has reiterated in the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and subsequently in the CTBTO Ministerial Meetings, that it is taking steps to ratify the CTBT as early as possible. As part of our nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation priorities, ratification of CTBT is now recognized as an imperative need. Sri Lanka is planning a number of activities with CTBTO in the coming years, with a regional on-site Inspection Training programme towards end of this year. This is a manifestation of Sri Lanka's commitment to realizing the goals set by CTBT.

We do recognize the importance of safeguards and verification system available under the NPT. We are currently studying the Additional Protocol to Safeguards Agreement and the benefits it offers for parties, in the area of verification.

We do not need to over-emphasize the increasing role of nuclear security in an era where nuclear material and technology reaching the hands of non-state actors

remains a distinct and dangerous possibility. We call for support for IAEA's emergency and incident reporting system. The Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials is a centerpiece in the legal architecture for nuclear security. In addition, the international convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism provides a comprehensive legal framework to prevent nuclear material falling into unlawful hands.

While efforts should continue towards the objective of general and complete disarmament, a new paradigm has resulted in the nuclear discourse, which makes it imperative to achieve nuclear disarmament based on humanitarian norms. This is pursuant to the emphasis placed by the NPT Review Conference in 2010, which expressed concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use, or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This movement has now made steady progress bringing within its sweep a large number of states and civil society organizations, clamoring for decisive change in thinking given the grave danger posed to humanity by nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka values the work being done in this area including by civil society and think tanks and extend its fullest support for this initiative.

Sri Lanka welcomes the understanding reached in Lausanne, Switzerland between Iran and the EU3+3 on Iran's nuclear programme and hopes that a final agreement will be reached as scheduled in June this year.

Sri Lanka reiterates its support for Iran's efforts to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and join the international community's efforts in the peaceful pursuit of nuclear technology under oversight by the IAEA and within the framework of the NPT.

We also wish to reiterate the importance of reconvening in the near future, the Conference on Middle East as a Zone free of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which did not take place in 2012, as envisaged in the decision made by 2010 NPT Review Conference. Efforts need to be renewed with greater political will in consultation with all parties, to set the process in motion in a time-bound manner, to make the proposal a reality.

We would also like to highlight the importance of peace education and disarmament education. In this connection, I refer to the initiative taken in Sri Lanka by Judge C.G. Weeramantry, former Judge and Vice President of the International Court of Justice, in establishing the Weeramantry International Center for Peace Education and Research (WICPER) in 2001. The Centre has taken a series of meaningful measures to disseminate peace education, cross-cultural understanding, and international law, particularly among school children.

In conclusion Madame Chair, Sri Lanka reaffirms its support for efforts by all States Parties to the NPT towards the objective of achieving the 3 pillars of the NPT, namely nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy that would contribute to the progress and prosperity of humankind.
