



Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN, Geneva

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Sri Lanka supports convening conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally - binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva Ravinatha Aryasinha expressing concern on the slow progress made over the decades on international multilateral nuclear disarmament efforts, has affirmed Sri Lanka's support for the convening of a conference in 2017, to negotiate a legally - binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. Sri Lanka further noted that the agreement on such a negotiation would ensure the fulfillment of the wish of the UN membership at large.

He made these observations during an intervention by Sri Lanka at the third and final session of the General Assembly mandated Open - Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, held in Geneva last week. During its final plenary meeting held on 19th August 2016, the Group adopted the report by vote, and recommend to the General Assembly to convene a Conference in 2017, to negotiate a legally - binding instrument, to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. The recommendation, which will be assessed by the General Assembly, is seen as a significant step towards nuclear disarmament.

Elaborating on Sri Lanka's position at the plenary, Ambassador Aryasinha said "while Sri Lanka together with the G- 21 members will continue to work in favour of a Comprehensive nuclear weapons convention at the Conference on Disarmament, Sri Lanka on its part considers that it is reasonable for the G-21 States to also extend support for other processes on nuclear disarmament such as the negotiation of a prohibition treaty, which can lead to the ultimate objective of complete elimination of nuclear weapons." He further stressed that this is an opportunity for States to come up with concrete steps, on multilateral nuclear disarmament and encouraged making forward-looking recommendations to the General Assembly.

'The Open - Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations' was established pursuant to the General Assembly Resolution 70/33, adopted last year with a mandate to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. The Group was requested by the resolution to submit its report with agreed recommendations to the 71st Session of the General Assembly this year.

Member States, civil society representatives, and the representatives of international organizations and academia engaged in the work of the OEWG at its three sessions held in February, May and August this year. The Deputy Permanent Representative Mrs. Samantha Jayasuriya and Second Secretary Mrs. Mafusa Lafir of the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations participated in the deliberations.

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Geneva

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