Sri Lanka says CD should not be subjected to the vagaries of changing int. strategic landscape

Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, addressing the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on Tuesday (31 July 2012), has expressed Sri Lanka's "profound disappointment that the Conference has not been enabled to undertake substantive work on its agenda". He said, "it is time to avoid the temptation of subjecting the work of this Conference to the vagaries of changing international strategic landscape, and instead, to harness its potential to contribute towards enhancing cooperative security". Emphasizing the importance of the CD "as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community", Ambassador Aryasinha said, "in order to continue to preserve the unique role of the Body, it is vital that all of us, the Member States, allow the Conference to begin its substantive work on the basis of a balanced and focussed Programme of Work, that takes into account security concerns of all its Members in an equitable manner, thereby ensuring its acceptance by consensus". Geneva31 July 2012 The full statement by Ambassador Aryasinha is attached.

Statement by H.E. Ravinatha AryasinhaAmbassador/Permanent Representative of Sri Lankaat the CD Plenary31st July 2012 I thank you Mr President, for your kind words of welcome. Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and express our appreciation of the open, transparent and inclusive manner in which you are guiding the proceedings of the Conference.I have the honour to make a general statement to the plenary of this august Conference following my assumption of duties as the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN in Geneva 2 weeks ago. I am also honoured that Sri Lanka is currently the Coordinator of the Group of 21.Mr. President,Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament which we emphasise is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, as mandated by the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-I). In this context, we express our profound disappointment that the Conference has not been enabled to undertake substantive work on its agenda. In order to continue to preserve the unique role of the Body, it is vital that all of us, the Member States, allow the Conference to begin its substantive work on the basis of a balanced and focussed Programme of Work, that takes into account security concerns of all its Members in an equitable manner, thereby ensuring its acceptance by consensus. Sri Lanka maintains its concerns that the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use, poses an overarching threat to humanity, and joins the collective voice for the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals. Pending this achievement, we are of the view that there is an urgent need to reach an early agreement on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We encourage nuclear weapon States to reduce nuclear danger through progressive multilateral nuclear disarmament beginning with the de-alerting of nuclear weapons and reducing the operational readiness of weapons systems. We stand ready to work within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, towards achieving this objective. We believe that it is our joint commitment and responsibility. It is our common objective to see the world become a safer place. International security architecture, in the form of Treaties and initiatives, exists to help us achieve that objective. Whilst the international community has been active in bolstering that architecture, it is evident that this needs to be further strengthened. These global challenges require global solutions. The solutions must take us towards an increase in the pace of multilateral disarmament as well as non-proliferation, which should remain an inclusive process, taking into account the security interests of all States and on the basis of the principle of undiminished security for all. We are of the view that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament is necessary in order that disarmament and non-proliferation could both advance in a mutually reinforcing manner. Sri Lanka also supports the promotion of the use of space based technologies, for peaceful purposes. These technologies have become a part of our daily life. Increasingly, in the use of information, communication, banking and navigation sectors have become dependent on space based technologies. We are of the view that the exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies shall be for peaceful purposes and should be for the common benefit of all countries regardless of their level of economic or scientific development.To this end Sri Lanka, together with Egypt, has remained one of the original co-sponsors of the resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. Whist we work multilaterally towards this goal, the growing use of outer space calls for redoubling of efforts in areas such as transparency, confidence building and better information on the part of the space capable countries to enable us to make advancements in this field. We believe that prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security as we witness the rapid spread of space launch capability and increasing offensive applications of space technologies. The importance therefore of forging ahead as a matter of priority with negotiations on international legally binding instruments to prevent space weaponisation cannot be over emphasised. Sri Lanka commends the joint initiative of China and Russia on the draft treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) presented in 2008, and welcomes it as a basis towards adopting an international binding instrument. Sri lanka has always cautioned that given the dynamism of space technologies and the fast spreading launch capabilities, if we do not negotiate barriers against a costly arms race in space now, we will be talking about non proliferation in space, a few years down the road. Our experience in terrestrial non proliferation efforts should tell us how difficult, or even impossible, it would be to achieve that in outer space. The concept of Negative Security Assurances is vital to the interests of Non-Nuclear Weapons States. Although it is often construed to be arising from a strategic discourse, it is important to note, however, that the concept is premised on the primacy of the security of people. Pending realization of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, which is the ultimate objective of this Conference, it is NSAs which could provide confidence to States that are not in possession of nuclear weapons, that their survival and security will not be jeopardised by those which possess them. It is timely that the

Conference moved forward in entrenching this concept as part of its agreed work programme. We therefore reiterate that the integrity and credibility of the Conference on Disarmament must be maintained and forward movement made. It is time to avoid the temptation of subjecting the work of this Conference to the vagaries of changing international strategic landscape, and instead, to harness its potential to contribute towards enhancing cooperative security. Sri Lanka hopes to remain proactively engaged within the Conference on Disarmament to help achieve its objectives. In conclusion, Mr. President, I wish to felicitate the Presidencies of Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia and Finland for their steadfast steering of the Conference in 2012, and wish you every success in your tenure as President in the coming weeks.I thank you.