
Sri Lanka calls for a balanced approach in addressing NPT goals

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Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, has called for "a balanced approach" in addressing the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Noting that "Sri Lanka remains fully committed to the nuclear non-proliferation commitments of the NPT and have steadfastly and consistently supported the global initiatives on non-proliferation", Ambassador Aryasinha noted that "nuclear non-proliferation however remains one of three pillars of the NPT, which requires equal attention along with the other two - promotion of safe and secure use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and nuclear disarmament". He said "such an approach which includes the implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed on to meet the disarmament commitments during the 2000 Review Conference to advance progressively towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, is a necessary step on the road map to achieving the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons." Ambassador Aryasinha made these observations when he addressed the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on its opening day on Monday 22 April 2013. Full text of Statement…

Statement by HE Ravinatha Aryasinha, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka at the Second Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Geneva, 22 April 2013 My delegation at the outset wishes to extend its congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of the Second Preparatory Committee of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We assure you our fullest cooperation in your work. We are hopeful that under your able leadership and guidance, the Committee will achieve success.

My country is fully committed to the nuclear non-proliferation commitments of the NPT. We have steadfastly and consistently supported the global initiatives on non-proliferation. Nuclear non-proliferation however, remains one of the three pillars of the NPT, which requires equal attention. A balanced approach in addressing non-proliferation, promotion of safe and secure use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and nuclear disarmament, is therefore imperative. Such an approach, my delegation believes, is a necessary step on the road map to achieving the ultimate goal of all State parties gathered here today, a world free of nuclear weapons. It is against this backdrop that Sri Lanka encourages the implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed on to meet the disarmament commitments during the 2000 Review Conference to advance progressively towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka continues to be concerned about the existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use, as it poses a menace to humanity. It is Sri Lanka's belief, that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament is required in order to achieve our ultimate goal. In this context, Sri Lanka is committed to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the early entry into force of this instrument. We also recognize that the Fissile Material Cut off Treaty (FMCT) is a means to addressing the proliferation of fissile material which amounts to nuclear weapon proliferation, and that it is imperative to begin negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty that bans the production of fissile material for manufacturing of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We believe that these instruments would assist in controlling the proliferation of nuclear arsenals. The importance of strengthening the Nuclear Disarmament mechanism is evident in recent activities which have taken place contrary to International Law. The situation which prevails in the Korean Peninsula reminds us of the urgency of the call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons since we firmly believe that total elimination of nuclear weapons from the world is the only possible way for the survival of humanity. It is for this reason that we continue the stress that states should move forward towards total elimination and the absolute ban of the nuclear arsenal. Sri Lanka welcomes the establishment of nuclear weapons free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco), South Pacific (Taratonga), Southeast Asia (Bangkok treaty) and Africa (Pelindaba treaty) in accordance with the guidelines of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I recall that Sri Lanka supported the proposal of establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East. We continue to extend that support. The early convening of the Conference on a Middle East Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was postponed in December 2012 is important. Sri Lanka appreciates the increased cooperation among States to establish nuclear weapons free zones, and considers this as an indication of the commitment of States towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka recognizes as stipulated in Article IV of the NPT, the fundamental right of the parties to the NPT to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purpose without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the treaty. While it is the right of an individual State to pursue such an option when it chooses to, it is imperative to acknowledge that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety and nuclear security rests with individual States. We believe it is the responsibility of States to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by complying with its objectives. We strongly support nuclear capability verification under the framework of the IAEA Statute and the NPT. In this connection, the required safeguards should be implemented in a manner designed to comply with Article IV of the Treaty. While acknowledging the valuable contribution extended by the IAEA through its technical cooperation programme, in the areas of human health, agriculture and rural development, advance water resource management, environmental protection, nuclear safety and nuclear energy, Sri Lanka particularly encourages the IAEA to strengthen the technical cooperation programme in assisting developing States parties in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee as this would lay a strong foundation for a successful Review Conference of NPT in 2015. I believe the commitment and political will of all State parties are essential to achieving a positive and solid outcome in this new review cycle of NPT, and to accomplish the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. I thank you.