



PERMANENT MISSION OF SRI LANKA

GENEVA

STATEMENT TO THE PLENARY MEETING
BY
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,

It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome you to Geneva and to the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is confident that with your well recognized diplomatic skills and experience in multilateral negotiations, you will be able to discharge the responsibilities of the Presidency successfully. My delegation's co-operation will always be available to you in full measure. As we welcome you Mr. President, we must say how much we miss your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Miguel Marin-Bosch, who has left an indelible impression on the CD. Let me also welcome to the Conference on Disarmament our new colleagues, Ambassadors of Brazil, Indonesia and Pakistan. My delegation also appreciates the direction of the work of the Conference so ably and amiably given by the immediate past President of the Conference, Ambassador Don Nanjira of Kenya. My delegation is sad to notice the absence of Ambassador Shannon of Canada and Ambassador Boytha of Hungary, who have left our company recently. Very soon, Ambassador Satis Chandra of India will depart our company. They all have contributed substantially to the work of the Conference and my delegation notes with appreciation the contributions they have made to the C.D.

Mr. President,

We are encouraged by the presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations with us today. My delegation is confident that his presence, personal commitment to disarmament and the encouraging words he spoke would no doubt help the Conference on Disarmament discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it, with added vigor.

Mr. President,

Majority of delegations who spoke in the CD during the past few weeks expressed their joy and satisfaction at the successful conclusion of the **Review and Extension Conference of the NPT** in New York on 12 May. Despite its inability to come up with a final declaration, the Conference recognized that there was a majority of parties in favour of the indefinite extension the NPT, thus, casting aside permanently the apprehensions entertained by some States party to the Treaty, that someday, somehow its longevity will be threatened and the world community will be forced to deal with the serious problem of nuclear anarchy. It is important to recall that not only the States party to the Treaty were able to extend the Treaty indefinitely, but also, they were able to reach that historic decision without resorting to a vote. I will be stating the obvious Mr. President, if I were to say that such a vote would not have been without repercussions.

Decision on the indefinite extension was not the only important act of the Conference. It also succeeded in deciding on a set of **"Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament"**. Another decision was taken on a set of steps for **"Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty"**. Finally, a call was also made to all States of the Middle-East that have not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the NPT as soon as possible. This was the harvest we reaped in New York collectively, and collectively we shall enjoy the fruits of our labour, in the years to come.

Mr. President,

One thing is clear. This is not the time for us to sit on our laurels and congratulate ourselves for the good work done. My delegation sees the NPT Conference as an important milestone we have passed in our long and arduous journey in pursuit of **nuclear disarmament** leading to eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

If we fail to tread this path carefully and tirelessly, we would run the risk of sliding down the precipice only to end up where we started, or face a worse situation. We would do well to avoid such an eventuality at all costs: we should build upon our achievements until we reach our final goal.

We should not forget the fact that the decision we reached in New York was not to replace nuclear anarchy with nuclear apartheid. Nuclear weapons cannot be the preserve or the birthright of a handful of countries who split the atom first and closed the door on others. By indefinitely extending the NPT, we neither authorized the Nuclear Weapon States to be the sole possessors of nuclear weapons indefinitely, nor did we concede that they have a right to use such weapons. The Non-Nuclear Weapon States have kept their part of the bargain. In keeping with the solemn commitment given in New York, the Nuclear Weapon States should pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and charter the course for total elimination of this category of weapons of mass destruction. The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating body responsible for disarmament matters. Therefore, it is the responsibility of this Conference to commence work in that direction. The CD should establish an Ad Hoc Committee, with an appropriate mandate in 1996 to commence negotiations on this important agenda item.

Mr. President,

We should not ignore the fact that although on paper there are five Nuclear Weapon States, in reality there are several others who have crossed the threshold and become undeclared Nuclear Weapon States. Worse still, there are many others, for

whom crossing the threshold is only a matter of political decision. Given the advanced technical capabilities many countries have today, and the resources at their disposal, it is a small miracle that these countries have so far not opted to acquire nuclear weapons. The twenty five year post NPT period saw the emergence of several countries who developed nuclear weapon capability. Should we fail to achieve progress in nuclear disarmament and reach a decision on the elimination of nuclear weapons soon, that will be an invitation for others to follow suit.

It is for these reasons that States party to the NPT, particularly the Nuclear Weapon States, should commit themselves fully to and implement the set of "**Principles and Objectives for Nuclear-Non Proliferation and Disarmament**". If these principles and objectives are ignored or go unimplemented, it may drive nuclear capable countries to invoke Art. X(1) of the treaty on the ground that their supreme interests have been jeopardized. None of us would dare say that such a scenario belongs in the realm of fantasy. We should avoid the temptation of being selective in putting into practice these principles and objectives.

Mr. President,

Although it is hardly two months since the conclusion of the NPT Conference, I must confess that the post-NPT period has been less than comforting for most of us. Hardly forty-eight hours had passed following the conclusion of the NPT Conference, when the vibrations of yet another nuclear test brought the reality home; that we have not yet seen the end of the beast which confronted the humanity half a century ago. Soon thereafter, another Nuclear Weapon State decided to break its three year old moratorium, and announced that it would conduct a series of tests. Confronted with the escalating international public opinion, these Nuclear Weapon States have been at great pains explaining their positions. As my delegation had the occasion to express the position of my Government last week in this forum on these developments, I would refrain, at this point, from dwelling on this matter any further.

Apart from the undertaking given in Art. VI of the NPT "to pursue negotiations in good faith" for nuclear disarmament etc., there is nothing to prevent the Nuclear Weapon States from continuing nuclear tests. To that extent, they can argue that they are operating within the treaty. These Nuclear Weapon States maintain that they must continue testing to ensure the safety and reliability of their nuclear weapons, prior to becoming parties to, or entry into force of the CTBT. Understandably, these positions hardly convince those who support the moratorium on testing. While some Nuclear

Weapon States seem to be losing no time to ensure the safety and reliability of their stockpiles, the Non-Nuclear Weapon States are traumatized by these events as such testing threaten their safety and security.

Mr. President,

We should not permit a situation in which the number of nuclear warheads in the possession of Nuclear Weapon States is significantly reduced, and at the same time, allow qualitative improvement to the remaining warheads, so as to greatly enhance their range and/or the destructive power. This would be inevitable, if we permit testing of any type of nuclear weapons under the future test ban treaty regime.

In this context, it is rather disturbing to hear the views expressed during our negotiations that provision should be made in the CTBT for tests to assure the safety and reliability of existing nuclear stockpiles. While we are busy discussing the **scope** of the treaty, we hear murmurs behind our backs that some scientists favour continued testing of small nuclear devices. This is certainly a disturbing turn of events. At this crucial juncture of negotiations, members of the CD should weigh the consequences of promoting such ideas or insisting on such tests. We should bear in mind that the CD is negotiating for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and not yet another PTBT or a Threshold Test Ban Treaty. There should be no doubt in our minds that our collective endeavour here in the CD is to finalize a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Such a treaty should ban all nuclear testing, in all environments and for all time. It should attract universal adherence and contain provisions to cover the vast strides being made in science and technology that could help conceal nuclear testing, both large and small. Nothing should undermine the comprehensive nature of the test ban treaty.

Mr. President,

While the scope of the CTBT is being discussed, we should not entertain proposals that would undermine the comprehensive nature of the treaty. It is for this reason that Sri Lanka disagrees with the arguments advanced in favour of **peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs)**. Since mankind's violent exposure to nuclear energy half a century ago and hundreds of tests later, no place has been accorded to PNEs. This situation led to the disbanding of the "PNE" unit in the IAEA Secretariat. The physical process involved in the explosion of nuclear devices, whether peaceful or otherwise, is the same. Given the indistinguishability between peaceful and other nuclear tests and their adverse impact on the environment and many other reasons, Sri Lanka is not convinced that PNEs will have a role to play in the post-CTBT environment. We should, therefore, not make provisions for PNEs in the CTBT.

Mr. President,

As you are aware, this is the final meeting of the second session of the CD for 1995. Although a major part of the time allocated to the CD for this year has already been spent, I wonder whether we can justifiably be proud of the manner in which we have utilized the time and resources allocated to us. Needless to say that we are in this predicament today due to the situation created by us at the beginning of the first session. In this regard, we are most grateful to you Mr. President for the commendable efforts taken by you to get the CD out of the situation by proposing a package intended to create several Ad Hoc Committees and other working arrangements, in addition to the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB, the only Committee we have been able to establish this year. We extend to you our best wishes and continued cooperation to get the CD on track once again.

Mr. President,

It is important that we should not follow the same path next year and find ourselves in the same predicament once again. One way to avoid a repetition is to reach an understanding prior to the conclusion of our work this year on the agenda and the work programme for 1996. If we succeed, we would be better placed to undertake the responsibilities entrusted to us; that is to engage earnestly in negotiations on crucial issues which we have to finalize here in the Conference on Disarmament. To do otherwise will be an exercise in futility. We should think over this matter carefully and encourage the next President of the CD to conduct consultations and reach agreement before the end of our final Session for 1995.

Thank you Mr. President.