

**Statement by the President of the Conference on Disarmament,  
H E Mrs. Sarala Fernando (Sri Lanka)  
at the Plenary of the Conference on 27 March 2007**

In my statement to the informal plenary last Friday introducing the document CRP.4, I provided the assessment of the 2007 Presidents of the Conference (P-6) on the work done during the first part of this year's session, based on our interaction with and inputs received from all Coordinators, our own participation in the plenaries and the informal meetings, bilateral consultations with all delegations, and meetings with Groups and Group Coordinators.

I would like to thank on behalf of P-6 the many delegations across the regions who spoke both at informal and formal plenaries last Friday in support of the Presidential Draft Decision contained in document CD/2007/L.1. At the same time, there were a few delegations who sought further clarifications mainly in relation to methods of work and procedures. In the spirit of transparency, I would like to address these points in order to assist in assessing the proposal.

With regard to the question of balance, we firmly believe that the proposal has been carefully crafted to reach a compromise between different views, priorities and interests, and what is realistically achievable in relation to short-term and long term objectives of member States. I would like to stress that the proposal contained in the document CD/2007/L.1 reflects the views of member States. I would also like to refer to the chapeau of L.1 which states that the Conference will decide on the present draft decision without prejudice to future work and negotiations on its agenda items.

It is our firm view that the proposal is fully compatible with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference. The Rules of Procedure clearly states that the work of the Conference can be conducted under any arrangement agreed by the Conference. The Conference is the master of its own Rules of Procedure and their role is to facilitate our work. At the informal Plenary last Friday the Secretary-General of the Conference further underlined this position.

With regard to the issue of duration of the draft decision, I would like to inform that the draft decision in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, will be valid for the 2007 session of the CD.

With regard to the time-table, we believe that there is a practical need for flexibility as regards to the allocation of time. Therefore, the P-6 will propose a suitable draft time-table in consultation with the Coordinators for the consideration of the Conference, after a decision is taken on the present draft proposal.

With regard to the appointment of Coordinators for specific issues by the Conference, during our consultations the prevailing view was that the current method of working with Coordinators has been useful and appropriate and therefore it should be continued and further elaborated. These Coordinators are accountable to the Conference, which will appoint them and they will present their reports to the Conference for consideration. The meetings chaired by the Coordinators will be informal in nature unless otherwise decided by the Conference. The Rules of Procedure of the Conference will apply to the meetings presided over by the Coordinators.

Finally, in keeping with the undertaking given by the P-6 at the beginning of this year to the Conference as per the organizational framework presented in January, we intend to conduct a formal Plenary on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 10.00 a.m. to take a decision on L.1.

Thank you.