

**Statement by the President of the Conference on Disarmament,
H E Mrs. Sarala Fernando (Sri Lanka)
at the informal Plenary of the Conference on 23 March 2007**

1. On 24 January 2007 Ambassador Mtshali of South Africa in her capacity as the President of the Conference on Disarmament announced on behalf of the 2007 Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament (P-6) the appointment of the following Co-ordinators to conduct informal meetings in the first part of the CD:

Ambassador Wegger Strømme of Norway for agenda item 1
Ambassador Carlo Trezza of Italy for agenda item 2
Ambassador Paul Meyer of Canada for agenda item 3
Ambassador Carlos Paranhos of Brazil for agenda item 4
Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria for agenda item 5
Ambassador Makarim Wibisono of Indonesia for agenda item 6
and Ambassador John Duncan of the United Kingdom for agenda item 7

2. The 2007 Presidents of the Conference have undertaken to assess the work done during the first part of the session and to propose a way forward for the second part of the session. This report is based on their interaction with and inputs received from all Co-ordinators, their own participation in the plenaries and the informal meetings, bilateral consultations with all delegations, and meetings with groups and group co-ordinators.

3. During the first part of the session the Co-ordinators have chaired a large number of informal meetings under the authority of the 2007 Presidents of the Conference, during which the member States had the opportunity to carry out thorough discussions on all agenda items.

a) The informal meetings under agenda item 1 covered a wide spectrum of issues, including a possible convention prohibiting nuclear weapons, other legal instruments, a phased programme on nuclear disarmament, as well as transparency and confidence-building measures. Several other specific measures were also discussed.

b) The informal meetings under agenda item 2 covered several issues but delegations tended to focus on a possible treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

c) The informal meetings under agenda item 3 covered several issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including possible elements of a future international legal instrument on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, as well as proposals for transparency and confidence-building measures.

d) The informal meetings under agenda item 4 covered several issues, including a possible legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as well as nuclear-weapon-free zones.

e) During the informal meetings under agenda item 5, a variety of issues related to this agenda item was raised. Delegations expressed their views on these issues and their relevance to the Conference.

f) The informal meetings under agenda item 6 identified a wide spectrum of issues, some of which were dealt with by other Co-ordinators or in other fora.

g) During the informal meetings under agenda item 7, a variety of issues was raised. Delegations expressed their views on these issues and their relevance to the Conference.

4. The above has given ground for the assessment that:

- a. a certain momentum has been created to move the Conference on Disarmament out of its longstanding stalemate and that every effort should now be made to actually do so;
- b. there exists a general recognition that this requires a fair amount of give and take by all delegations;
- c. the method of working with Co-ordinators has been useful and appreciated and should continue;
- d. in some areas progress could be facilitated if the system of Co-ordinators was given a more structured form;
- e. during the second part of the session the Conference should focus on issues where there exists a critical mass of common ground to build upon;
- f. to move the work of the Conference forward substantively, it would be necessary for the Conference to take a formal decision;
- g. there is a general readiness to begin negotiations, without any preconditions, on a non-discriminatory multilateral treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; continued focused work on issues under agenda items 1, 3 and 4 carries the potential of establishing common ground on which to move towards future negotiations;
- h. all agenda items should be kept open for proposals and efforts that might be brought forward later during the session and appropriate time should be allocated during the second part of the session for agenda items 5, 6 and 7.

5. Following intensive consultations with the entire membership of the Conference, the P-6 has proposed a draft decision for the Conference, contained in document CD/2007/CRP.4, which will be circulated by the Secretariat in a short while. This draft proposal was shared among the CD membership through regional consultations, conducted by the P-6 on 21 March 2007.