

**Statement by H.E ALA Azeez
Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, Vienna**

**2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear
Weapons (NPT)**

Subsidiary Body II - Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Item: Regional issues, nuclear weapon free zones and related matters

Mr. Chairman, let me thank you for giving me the floor. As the Chair of this subsidiary body and as a good friend, please be assured that you have my support and cooperation as well as that of the delegation of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Chairman, as stated in our general statement delivered on 30 April 2015, Sri Lanka welcomes the understanding reached in Lausanne, Switzerland between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany (i.e. USA, UK, France, Germany, China and the Russian Federation) on Iranian nuclear programme after more than a decade of negotiations. It is our fervent hope that a final agreement will be negotiated within the timeframe indicated.

Mr. Chairman, we associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Non-Aligned Movement under this item.

We support the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones, and we consider such zones as a form of mutually assuring security among members. Our support especially extends to the call for a Zone free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East.

We wish to reiterate in this context, the importance of working on and reconvening the Conference on Middle East as a Zone free of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which did not take place in 2012, contrary to the decision made by 2010 NPT Review Conference. The proposal for Middle East to be considered as a zone free of nuclear weapons has been a subject of discussion since the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Efforts need to be renewed with greater political will in consultation with all parties, to set the process in motion in a time-bound manner.

Our primary concern is ensuring peace and security in all regions. While peace will be established through concerted, coordinated and resolute efforts taken in the interest of the survival of humankind and its succeeding generations, defense of peace has to be constructed in the minds of people. We would like to highlight in this regard the importance of peace education and disarmament education.

We refer, in this context, to the initiative taken in Sri Lanka by Justice Weeramantry, former Judge of the International Court of Justice, in establishing the Weeramantry's International Center for Peace Education and Research (WICPER) in 2001. The Centre has taken a series of meaningful measures to disseminate peace education, cross-cultural understanding, and international law.

There is a greater need, as well to support disarmament education, particularly in developing countries and to provide expertise needed to understand and analyse the new trends and developments in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation field, including the dynamics and particularities of nuclear weapon-free zones.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
