

Statement by Ambassador Kshenuka Senewiratne, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka at the Plenary of the Conference on Disarmament, 22 March 2011

Mr President,

At the outset, my delegation congratulates you Ambassador Wang, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is pleased to see China, a country of the Asian region presiding over this august body. We applaud the strides made and high standards maintained by China in the disarmament arena. The no first use policy advocated in 1964 reflects China's commitment to being a responsible nuclear weapon state.

My delegation strongly supports the leading role played by China together with the Russian Federation towards negotiating a draft treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) as presented in 2008. We welcome this initiative as a basis towards adopting an international binding instrument. Sri Lanka too has taken a keen interest in achieving this objective, and in this context Egypt and Sri Lanka have alternately been submitting to the General Assembly a resolution on the prevention of arms race in outer space.

Sri Lanka continues to be concerned on the existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use, as it poses a menace to humanity, and therefore joins the collective voice for the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals. Pending this achievement, we are of the view that there is an urgent need to reach an early agreement on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We encourage nuclear weapon States to reduce nuclear danger through the de-alerting of nuclear weapons and diminishing the operational readiness of weapons systems. We

stand ready to work within the framework of this body, towards achieving this objective as it is our joint commitment and responsibility to our peoples.

Mr President,

Sri Lanka fully supports your proposals to hold informal meetings of the Conference on its agenda with appointed coordinators. Constructive dialogue on the core issues, would enable us to better arrive at a common understanding towards the adoption of a programme of work. I wish to reiterate our position that only through confidence building and equal respect for the security of all Member States that we will be able to achieve the much needed consensus towards this end.

Sri Lanka wishes you a successful term as President of the CD and pledge our fullest cooperation to you.

Thank you.