



I Thank you Madam President, for your kind words of welcome.

Since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, I wish to congratulate you on the assumption of the Presidency and appreciate the manner in which you are steering the discussion of the CD, and the inclusive, open and transparent manner in which you have approached this mandate. While, acknowledging your initiative of consulting Member States in advancing the work of the CD, the delegation of Sri Lanka assures you of its fullest support and cooperation in this challenging task, and reposes its confidence in your leadership.

Madam President,

Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament which is the sole multilateral negotiating forum. In this context, we express our disappointment that the Conference has once again failed to reach consensus on the Programme of Work. It is imperative that the Member States should continue to make concerted efforts to reach an early agreement on the CD's Programme of Work. It is my delegation's firm belief that the adoption of a Programme of Work could be possible only through confidence building and equal respect for the security of all Member States.

Madam President,

Nuclear Disarmament remains the highest priority of Sri Lanka in the work of the CD. My delegation 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. Sri Lanka's commitment to the elimination of the threat posed by nuclear weapons is reflected in the international treaty obligations undertaken in the field of disarmament. It is my belief that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament is required in order to achieve the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. As a country committed to complete disarmament, Sri Lanka encourages Member States to negotiate the comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Madam President,

Sri Lanka supports the convening of the Fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD IV), to discuss and consider issues pertaining to disarmament, and remains disappointed at the persistent lack of consensus on its convening. The importance of strengthening the Nuclear Disarmament mechanism is evident by recent events which have violated the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874 (2009). Sri Lanka continuously encourages Nuclear Weapon States to disarm their nuclear weapons as early as possible.

Madam President,

My delegation is 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. In this regard, it is imperative to start negotiations for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specific time frame. During the 67th General Assembly, it was decided to convene a high-level meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on 26th of September 2013 in New York. My delegation believes that this will provide an opportunity to Member States to continue discussions on the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Madam President,

I wish to reiterate that it is vital that the Conference begins its substantive work on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced Programme of Work. We are of the view that focused debates on all agenda items could help create a better understanding of our positions, and help forward movement.

May I conclude, Madam President, by wishing you a successful term as President of the CD and pledge Sri Lanka's fullest cooperation to you in executing your mandate.

I thank you.