



Statement

Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review
Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of the
Nuclear Weapons (NPT):

Item 4 - General Debate on Issues Related to all Aspects of the Work of
the Preparatory Committee

by

**H.E. Mr. A.L.A. Azeez,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka
to the UN in Geneva**

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**The Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations
and other International Organizations in Geneva**

Mr. President,
Excellencies, delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sri Lanka expresses its full support and cooperation for the work of this Committee under your able stewardship. We note the diverse aspects of the discussions that emerged in Vienna where the First Preparatory Meeting was held last year. We strongly believe that our deliberations during this second Prep-Com would build on these aspects and help move forward the NPT Agenda.

It is imperative that all our efforts be geared to ensuring that the 2020 Review Conference will lead to a consensus outcome, which galvanizes the commitments made in the 1995 Review Conference. Securing a world free of nuclear weapons should remain our first and foremost priority.

Mr. President,

The NPT provides an international framework for advancing nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear disarmament. These are the 'core' components of the Treaty on which States Parties have committed themselves to implement their obligations. These in our view are inter linked and are mutually reinforcing. General and comprehensive elimination of all nuclear weapons remains the ultimate goal that should be reached through progressive steps. The reality today, however, is a pronounced lack of will to progressively move forward in this area. Instead, an increasing tendency has been observed of seeking refuge behind terminologies , such as 'incremental approach', 'step-by-step approach', 'progressive realization'. Today, we have come to a stage in the peace and security discourse where such terminologies are no longer seen to have any practical value or meaning. Any serious, concerted efforts towards adopting a comprehensive package at the 2020 NPT Review must be bolstered by reaffirmation of a clear commitment by all parties to all the obligations and the Principles of the NPT.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka reiterates the importance of the NPT as the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament which ensures a balanced and

non-discriminatory approach to building international peace and security, while safeguarding the economic development prospects for all, through equal access to technology advancing peaceful uses. We support all efforts towards achieving the universalization of the NPT as the legal regime that enjoys the participation of the largest number of Member States of the United Nations including the P5. We also support the call for application of the full scope of the IAEA safeguards to ensure meaningful implementation of the provisions in the Treaty.

Lack of progress in the effective implementation of Article VI is a worrying trend. Moving away from this realistic path to disarmament may lend itself, in the medium to long term, to a possible re-emergence of an arms race, with far reaching consequences for humanity if it happened. It is important to recall at this point, that the commitments contained in the 1995 NPT Review package, particularly with regard to disarmament had been secured as a result of State parties agreeing to extend the NPT regime in the first place, without prejudice to the already ingrained obligation towards disarmament in the treaty.

Mr. President,

As we address the dichotomy between the lack of progress in disarmament and increasing emphasis and efforts on non-proliferation, we take this opportunity to call upon all states parties with the ability to do so, to manifest their clear commitment to the principle of disarmament by enhancing their support for, and investment in, disarmament training and education provided by the UN and other organisations including in the developing countries. Such programmes will particularly help developing countries to harness the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and energy, while contributing to international peace and security measures. That will also enable networking and coordination among states, strengthening understanding and cooperation in other important areas such as nuclear security.

We do not need to overemphasize right of all NNWS who are Parties to the NPT to receive effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances. We recall in this regard the July 1996 ICJ Advisory Opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Given the scale of death and destruction that could arise

from the use of nuclear weapons and the humanitarian consequences that may ensue, it is the collective call of humanity, as captured in the letter and spirit of the ICJ Advisory Opinion, to support the deliberations and initiatives on developing mechanisms to seek to prevent such catastrophes in future.

Mr. President,

IAEA's role in the advancement of nuclear technology for sustainable development and activities related to peaceful uses in countries that are states parties to NPT- as the main channel for such cooperation, is much appreciated. Application of the IAEA selection criteria and guidelines for transferring technology and knowhow through bilateral cooperation projects must continue to apply in a transparent and objective manner.

A nuclear security infrastructure linking nuclear safety regime and peaceful uses framework at the national level, is pivotal to an environment which leaves no room for vulnerabilities to be exploited by persons or groups with malicious intent. The civil society and the media too have a vital role to play in preventing threats to nuclear security and preventing any malicious use.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

We propose that this Meeting come up with elements and guidelines that will help a time bound and pragmatic action plan and outcome to emerge at the 2020 NPT Review. Building a better and secure future for all of us and for the generations to come is a shared call that we can shirk only at our own peril.

I thank you.