The Statement by

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(Check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,
Let me, at the outset, congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of this Second Session of the Preparatory Committee and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. Our felicitations also go to other members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your able guidance, this Session will further consolidate the process towards our goal, a successful conclusion of the Fifth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, in 2005.

Mr. Chairman,
Sri Lanka also wishes to associate fully with the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,
This session of the Preparatory Committee is taking place against the backdrop of several political and security uncertainties in terms of relations between member States of the UN. In addition, apparent strategic flux in the global security architecture seems to have affected the balance which is essential to engender successful arrangements for arms control and disarmament. The threat of terrorism, both perceived and real, has had an adverse impact on not only internal security of States, but also on international relations. The danger of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction no more remain in the realm of imagination due to fears generated by unprecedented devastating terrorist attacks on city centers in several countries. In another dimension, nuclear weapons, notwithstanding its absolute destructive capacity, is still brandished by some as the ultimate weapon in some instances its possession is apparently considered as a status symbol.

Mr. Chairman,
The objective of a “world without nuclear weapons” still remains as distant as ever. This practically unusable weapon still remains in the armoury of several countries. There is also a strong possibility that the number of countries in possession of such weapons could increase, if the mystique and the power status attached to such weapons is not removed and a clear action programme is not established to eliminate this dangerous weapon. At the same time, the approach of some to de-link the measures for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons from that of nuclear disarmament is a matter of serious concern. Such anendeavour is not only preposterous, but fraught with danger. World will never be safer with an arrangement that would create permanent ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ in nuclear weaponry. Such a regime in our view would be inherently unstable and unbalanced. History is full of failures of such projects in all fields of human activity. And in such instances ultimate leveling off has created major upheavals. Moreover, perpetual existence of nuclear weapons and arrangements at apparently managing them safely, is not only untenable and contradictory, but could lead to unpredictable disastrous consequences.

Mr. Chairman,
There is near consensus in the international community that complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, not only by States, but also by non-state actors like terrorist groups. In this context, the preponderant number of adherents to the NPT has placed their faith on the NPT regime on the basis that this regime is not merely a non-proliferation
measure but a disarmament measure too. However, the road map towards this ultimate goal has not remained static. On several occasions not only the road map has been redrawn but now even the goal posts are apparently being shifted. In this regard, we recall the promise of 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT. The indefinite extension of the NPT was not meant to be a one sided gesture that would perpetuate the possession of nuclear weapons by some for ever. It was more a blueprint for eventual elimination of this abominable weapon system from our world. Once again we recall the 2000 Review Conference which produced an agreed framework for the implementation of the NPT, another road map. The 13 steps that were agreed upon were landmark achievements, but most of the steps still await implementation.

Mr. Chairman,
Sri Lanka is not a formidable country but as a responsible member of the international community, on our part we have always placed our trust on treaty obligations in all spheres of international relations. In this context, we will soon take action to forward a report to the Review Conference on Implementation of the NPT by Sri Lanka as required by our treaty commitments. In our view, commitments must be adhered to by all countries, big or small, so that treaty regimes become a viable international tool for stable and predictable security relations between States as well as the bedrock of a verifiable international security system. In this regard, we are dismayed by the decision of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to withdraw from the NPT at this juncture. In fact, it is our expectation that the nuclear non-proliferation regime must become truly universal, so that NPT regime becomes a reliable non-proliferation measure leading towards effective nuclear disarmament that will usher new era of global peace and security. In this connection, as a very encouraging initiative, we welcome most warmly the decision by Cuba to join the non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Chairman,
As a manifestation of our commitment to all aspects of the NPT regime, Sri Lanka has always emphasized the necessity for establishing in the Conference on Disarmament, an appropriate subsidiary body for nuclear disarmament as well for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument for security assurances by the Nuclear-Weapons States to the Non-Nuclear Weapons States. Sri Lanka also supports the establishment of an ad-hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, by taking into consideration both disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. Pending the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Sri Lanka also hopes that Nuclear-Weapon States and other nuclear weapon capable States will continue to maintain a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions. As a further relevant additional measure Sri Lanka co-initiate every year the resolution on the “prevention of an arms race in outer space”, at the First Committee with the expectation that the stalled consideration of that issue at the Conference on Disarmament would recommence at the earliest with an appropriate mandate. In our view, preventing an arms race in outer space will contribute towards strategic stability in the world and thereby facilitating the progressive reduction of nuclear weapons leading towards nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,
Early convening of the Fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Disarmament would be another step in the right direction. SSOD IV no doubt would
facilitate our quest towards establishing a revised set of mechanisms suitable for present
day to effectively reach nuclear non-proliferation as well as nuclear disarmament
objectives.

Mr. Chairman,
As another important measure arising out of our commitment of NPT, we believe in the
efficacy of the concept of Nuclear Weapon free Zones. The establishment and further
strengthening of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, including a nuclear-weapon-free
zone in the region of the Middle East, is vital to further consolidate the nuclear-non
proliferation regime. Sri Lanka therefore urges all States to work towards achieving such
goals. In the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is essential that Nuclear-Weapon
States as well as other nuclear-weapon capable States provide unconditional assurances
against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States in the zones.

Mr. Chairman,
It is our strong belief that urgent action on all these issues, among others, form an
essential part of strengthening the nuclear-non-proliferation regime in general, and
fulfilling the steps identified at the 2000 Review Conference in particular. Successful
conclusion of the 2005 Review conference in our view would require resolute action, at
least in some of these issues.

Mr. Chairman,
Sri Lanka welcomes the signing of the Moscow Treaty on strategic offensive arms
reductions in May 2002. Nevertheless, We believe that reductions in deployment and in
operational status cannot substitute for irreversible cuts and the elimination of nuclear
weapons. In this regard, Sri Lanka reiterates the value of the principle of irreversibility
and the need to attach a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in the security doctrines
of Nuclear-Weapon States.

Mr. Chairman,
Finally, let me conclude by expressing the expectation of my delegation that this
Preparatory Committee Session, in addition to finalizing necessary procedural
arrangements for the forthcoming review conference, will be able to focus on a wide
range of substantive issues that needs our sustained attention in the run up to the 2005
Review Conference. We also reiterate our confidence in multilateral approach to all
disarmament issues. In our globalising and interdependent world, we are convinced
that none other than multilateral measures will eventually succeed.

Thank you.