



# SRI LANKA

**Statement**

**By**

**Ambassador H.M.G.S. Palihakkara**

**Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations**

**at the**

**General Debate**

**of the**

**First Committee**

**of the**

**United Nations General Assembly, 63<sup>rd</sup> Session**

**New York, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

*( Please check against delivery )*

**Mr. Chairman,**

My delegation wishes to congratulate you on your election and we look forward to a productive session under your able leadership.

My delegation associates ourselves with the Statement made by Indonesia setting out the NAM position on the issues before the Committee.

Sri Lanka's advocacy of multilateral efforts towards arms control and disarmament, has been as long standing as our membership of the organization. We believe that a progressively less weaponised security regime will be the more cost effective and more civilized way forward for sustainable peace and security within and between States. As a country facing the brunt of the scourge of terrorism, we know only too well how costly it is to spend scarce resources on armaments to ensure security.

At this session, we mark the 30<sup>th</sup> year since the first special session on disarmament and we are now discussing the holding of the next special session on disarmament. We are disappointed that we have yet to report any significant progress or indeed any noteworthy movement on the key issues of disarmament and non-proliferation in the multilateral arena. The Conference on Disarmament which is the only multilateral forum for such negotiations has not done much substantive work let alone any serious negotiations for a prolonged period. In fact, it has not yet been possible even to agree on a reasonable work schedule for this expensive forum. Commencement of meaningful work rather than repetition of known positions of delegations, is called for. Important treaties remain without entry into force. The consensus resolutions on FMCT remain unimplemented while CD negotiations remain stalled. There is nothing institutionally wrong with the CD as it has in the past produced treaties as complex as the CWC and CTBT. What is lacking of course is the willingness and not the ability to negotiate on these critical issues of disarmament and security.

Whilst dialogue and negotiations remain locked in procedural and other obstacles, tensions across continents and alliances seem to rise reminiscent of the Cold War era, creating grounds for unnecessary expenditures on arms races driven by the new strategic divides emerging in the old battle grounds and new nuclear tensions in different parts of the world.

It is therefore, necessary for the First Committee this year, to pay attention to meaningful and practical resolutions facilitating a way forward on multilateral work on several key disarmament and arms control issues.

On nuclear disarmament it is time that all States particularly, nuclear weapons States recognize that a holistic concept of security can only be aspired to and realized, if there is serious commitment to, and practical steps towards, eventual nuclear disarmament whilst pursuing nuclear non-proliferation measures. It must be clear to every one that non-proliferation has not and will not survive in a disarmament vacuum.

The three pillars of the NPT, non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses cannot be sustained only through a denial regime, but through a regime of mutual support aimed at realizing all three objectives. The very necessity of non-proliferation arises from the fact of the existence of nuclear weapons. Therefore, addressing the root cause is essential to deal with the ailment. As we analyze the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and while we prepare for the forthcoming Review Conference of 2010, the NPT States parties particularly the depository States would be well advised to reflect on the reality of the nexus between non-proliferation and global nuclear disarmament. Sri Lanka as a long standing party to the NPT, has always advocated that the NPT and the international security regime will be progressively under-mined and eroded if more nuclear weapons and new nuclear weapons States continue to emerge in violation of the treaty obligation and many recommendations contained in the many UNGA resolutions. Increasingly, the public at large, especially those Statesmen who are well versed with the security policies and doctrines associated with nuclear weapons are voicing concern about the nuclear States' continued insistence on the utility of nuclear weapons without paying due regard to their treaty commitments, towards the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals and from international security equation. We hope that the First Committee resolutions this year, and the deliberations of the forthcoming NPT review will benefit from the recent pronouncements by some leading Statesman regarding the desirability and indeed the practicality of eliminating nuclear weapons, paving the way for a credible programme of disarmament and non-proliferation. Sri Lanka would support initiatives at the First Committee that will be consistent with such a process to be pursued in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums.

We would also like to highlight the threat posed by terrorist groups and other non-State actors, who are seeking to acquire illegal military capability including the WMD materials as well as cyber attack capabilities. We therefore extend our support and encouragement to those initiative that will support the goal of eliminating illicit small arms and light weapons as we have ourselves taken a range of national measures to implement various steps envisaged by the SALW action plan of the UN and the SALW Resolutions of this Committee that enjoy broad based support.

In this regard, we would also like to stress the need for the appropriate UN mechanisms and organs including the Security Council to empower and build the capacity of member States to coordinate and implement Security Council resolutions such as 1373 that envisage practical measures to observe, detect and interdict illicit arms smuggling across borders and on the high seas violating national and international laws. As a country facing the threat of terrorism driven by transnational networks it has been our experience that more robust surveillance and implementation mechanisms are required to implement resolutions such as 1373. Currently, such regimes lack effectiveness at the supply end of the illicit arms operations thus leaving the principal burden of implementation at the receiving end.

Sri Lanka and Egypt will also work together again to ensure the passage of the First Committee Resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space this year as well. As noted by many delegations, the resolution on PAROS seeks to prevent the introduction of an arms race into outer space and to ensure space security against hostile activity or the debris which is becoming an increasing threat to space use. Since the advent of the space age more than 50 years ago, the space capability has spread to many regions and to many nations demonstrating the spirit of human ingenuity and the mobility of new technologies for exploring new frontiers. This is a tremendous tribute to human capacity to seek new knowledge and new resources. Regrettably, however, this last frontier of human exploration has also become a potential arena for conflict and hostility. The dual use technologies now available may weaponise space security, in the same way the human beings have managed to weaponise our terrestrial security. If this trend continues we will soon be facing the dilemma of non-proliferation efforts in outer space as well, with all attendant complexities and technological challenges such efforts will entail. Preventive diplomacy in outer space is therefore urgently called for. More so, as we see breathtaking technological developments in outer space out-pacing the rather hesitant efforts of negotiating space security arrangements within multilateral frameworks.

Sri Lanka supports regional approaches to peace, security and disarmament. We have consistently supported peace zones and nuclear weapon free zones in different parts of the world. If there is a nuclear arms race whether in Europe or in any other part of the world such developments will continue to cause concerns to countries like Sri Lanka which have not advocated such notions for security. We, therefore, call on existing nuclear countries and new nuclear countries to embark on a credible and multilateral nuclear disarmament programme that will progressively marginalize the utility of nuclear weapons and eventually eliminate them from national arsenals. We also call upon those nuclear States which have undertaken large scale nuclear programmes to ensure that there are adequate and internationally accepted safety measures built into those programmes so that potential radiation and other hazards emanating from accidents will be mitigated or minimized.

Mr. Chairman, in a already unstable world of financial and economic turmoil, multilateral efforts towards clearly visible results on disarmament and non-proliferation do not paint a pretty picture. At the same time global military expenditure has increased to a huge figure of 1.3 trillion US dollars. This represents a phenomenal expenditure compared to the relatively humble resource requirements for the Millennium Development Goals advocated by all of us.

The First Committee resolutions and the multilateral disarmament agenda leading to the next NPT review need to pave the way for some credible programme of arms control and disarmament seeking to reduce this burden so that the committee of nations can progressively de-weaponise security.

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