

## **TPNW – 03<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of States Parties**

**03-07 March 2025, New York**

### **General Debate (6 minutes)**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate you and other office bearers on your election. I assure you of Sri Lanka's fullest cooperation for the work of our agenda.

This year marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations - a fitting moment to reaffirm our commitment to its founding principles and to the three core pillars of peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development

While the United Nations has made notable strides in preserving international peace, it is deeply concerning that the threat of nuclear weapons continues to grow, undermining our collective security and the very ideals we strive to uphold.

As the UN Secretary General stated at the Conference on Disarmament, 'last month, the so-called doomsday clock moved one second closer to midnight.' The continuous investments in nuclear weapons, expansion of inventories of nuclear weapons and material, and rattling the nuclear saber as a means of coercion pose a threat to the very existence of the world.

Every country that possesses nuclear weapons is taking a gamble with humanity's future - one that could implode with a single miscalculation, misunderstanding, or moment of human error.

Given the rising tensions between nuclear powers, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has never been more important- it acts as a lodestar, guiding our collective efforts towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons that cause such horrors.

Today, we reaffirm our unwavering determination to advance nuclear disarmament, prevent proliferation, and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. As the Pact for the Future spells out clearly, "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." The only way to ensure this is to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons from the world.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka has long been a staunch advocate of these principles. Sri Lanka's commitment is reflected in our accession to this Treaty in September 2023, as well as our ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). I am also pleased to recall that, Sri Lanka actively participated in the negotiations of the TPNW in New York, which was adopted in 2017, and was among 122 states that voted in favour of its adoption. Sri Lanka also contributed in the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) process of 2016 in Geneva which led to the treaty negotiation process.

Sri Lanka believes that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is a moral imperative.

The modernization of nuclear arsenals and escalating geopolitical tensions only heighten the risks to global peace and security. We must reject the faulty premise that nuclear deterrence ensures stability. In reality, it deepens insecurity and mistrust, and increases the likelihood of catastrophic miscalculations.

Sri Lanka welcomes the progress made through the Vienna Action Plan and the ongoing work of States Parties to implement the Treaty, including efforts on disarmament verification, victim assistance, and environmental remediation. We should use this forum to build on these commitments by strengthening cooperation, advancing universalization, and ensuring the Treaty's effective implementation.

TPNW serves as an important complement to the existing non-proliferation architecture. We urge all States that have not yet done so to join this Treaty, strengthen its implementation, and take decisive steps toward eliminating nuclear weapons for the good of present and future generations.

Mr. President,

Our commitment to disarmament is not just about policy - it is about preventing human anguish. The humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be overstated and will affect generations to come. The catastrophic environmental, economic, and human costs of nuclear weapons have been documented; no response could truly repair the damage done. The only true protection against the use of nuclear weapons is their complete and verifiable elimination.

The world faces new challenges. We must be clear-eyed and determined to confront the emerging threats posed by advanced military technologies, including technological vulnerabilities in nuclear command and control systems. The integration of AI in decision-making processes poses new risks by reducing human input. We cannot rely on technical safeguards to prevent the death of millions - the only way to eliminate these risks is to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether.

Mr. President,

True global security - where all individuals are safe and can reach their full potential - requires addressing our shared challenges, such as climate change, food security, and sustainable development. The immense resources that are diverted towards modernizing arsenals of destructions can be productively used to efficiently address these shared challenges.

We must be clear about the path forward: we must reject nuclear weapons in all forms and work towards a world free from their looming threat. Let this meeting be a step towards that future - one defined not by fear, but by peace, security, and cooperation. Sri Lanka remains committed to this cause.

Thank you.