



**Third Session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on a Draft United Nations Declaration on the Right to Peace**

**20 - 24 April 2015**

**Statement by Sri Lanka**

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, my delegation congratulates you on your re-election to chair this important Working Group and thank you for the revised draft text on the Declaration on the Right to Peace that you have presented to this third session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group. Sri Lanka associates with the Statement delivered by NAM this morning.

The transparent, inclusive and objective approach adopted in formulating this text deserves commendation. The text, provides a sound basis for our work in the coming days that could lead to the finalization of the Declaration on the Right to Peace.

We are pleased to note that some of our proposals are reflected in the revised text. We, assure you of our continued cooperation and constructive engagement in realizing the mandate of this Working Group.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Sri Lanka delegation would like to provide the following general comments on the revised draft Declaration:

- We welcome the progress made so far by this Working Group in narrowing the gaps with regard to the diverse opinions expressed by delegates on the initial draft Declaration. The short, concise text, that is before us is an appropriate way to move forward in demonstrating the political will to establish the right for everyone to enjoy peace and security, human rights and development. These three key pillars are inter-linked and mutually reinforcing. Therefore, it is our hope that this Declaration will recognize by consensus, the importance of maintaining the right balance between these fundamentals on which the United Nations is founded.
- We recognize that the 'absence of war' does not guarantee peace. Ensuring safety, security, and the right to life are essential to achieving sustainable development and

peace. In this context, we underscore the sacrosanct responsibility of the State to take measures to protect the right to life of her peoples and ensure and uphold the promotion and protection of human rights including against all forms and manifestations of the heinous crimes of terrorism. We support the formulation of this idea in the preambular paragraph of the draft text.

- We also highlight the importance of preserving the concepts of ‘respecting the sovereignty’, ‘territorial integrity’ ‘self-determination of peoples’ and ‘political independence of sovereign States’, as stipulated in the UN Charter, as important elements in a final Right to Peace Declaration.
- While it is important to gain the broadest support for this draft Declaration and maintain brevity and focus it is equally important to be mindful of the fact that there are other critical processes that are currently ongoing that can have an important bearing on the final outcome of this Draft Declaration on Right to Peace. For example, we have rightfully recognized the Declaration on Right to Development, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs and, in the same, vein, we hope that a suitable formulation to note the importance of the post 2015 Development Agenda could be included.
- As the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO declares and reflected in the UNESCO Declaration on a Culture of Peace (1999) “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”. In this process, the role that education can and must play in all our societies across the world cannot be stressed enough. Therefore, we would like to suggest strengthening this view by including a reference to identify “education at all levels as one of the principal means to build a culture of peace”, which is in line with Article 4 of the *UNESCO Declaration on a culture of Peace*.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair,

Sri Lanka believes that success in the full implementation of a Declaration on Right to Peace can be best achieved by adopting the Declaration by consensus, and express the hope that we will be able to achieve that goal.

Thank You.