



**Statement by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka at the Conference on
Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT, New York, 22 September 2023**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Co-Presidents,
Executive Secretary Mr. Floyd,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate Norway and Panama on assuming the Presidency of the 13th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Let me also thank Italy and South Africa for their excellent work as previous Article XIV Coordinators and the untiring efforts of the Executive Secretary, Dr Floyd and the CTBTO team in promoting the entry into force of the Treaty.

Consistent with its long-standing pursuit and advocacy for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Sri Lanka ratified the CTBT in July this year. As you may be aware, Sri Lanka was already amongst the first signatories of the CTBT in October 1996, just days after the Treaty was open for signature. Since then, Sri Lanka has been effectively contributing to the development of the treaty's objectives. Sri Lanka hosts, since year 2000, an auxiliary seismological station in Pallekale, Kandy, which is part of the Treaty's International Monitoring System (IMS). We have also actively supported the work of the CTBTO's On-site Inspection (OSI) Division, through regular nomination of national experts to attend training programmes, and expert meetings and hosting CTBT activities within scope of the Treaty.

Even though we have been continuously engaged with the CTBTO since becoming a signatory to the Treaty in 1996, we do acknowledge that our treaty ratification process has been overdue. We are glad that we were able complete the ratification process this year, further reinforcing our commitment to the objectives of the Treaty, an end to nuclear testing leading to a nuclear weapons free world.

As a State Party that places importance in the Treaty's verification regime, Sri Lanka is pleased to host the next on-site inspection (OSI) Integrated Field Exercise (IFE), in 2025, which will bring together more than 180 technical experts and other participants from around the world. Sri Lanka will be the first South Asian country to host such large scale exercise while being the 2nd country in Asia to do so. It will serve as a significant opportunity for improvement of the on-

site inspection capabilities of the CTBTO and identify opportunities for further improvement. We will continue to work closely with the Preparatory Commission as arrangements are underway .

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

In the current context of the rapidly deteriorating international security architecture, Sri Lanka identifies the significance and the increasing relevance and normative value of the CTBT. we acknowledge the important achievements of the CTBT on its journey so far since its adoption 26 years ago, which includes creation of a strong global norm against nuclear testing, its role as a solid confidence and security building measure, establishment of a global monitoring system as well as the benefit of an international data center for scientific advancements of the mankind.

Despite these achievements of the CTBT and the progressive development of its verification regime, we remain deeply concerned of the prolonged delay in its entry into force. For effective pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation, the early entry into force of the CTBT should not only be a priority, but an absolute necessity as it could be the first concrete step towards breaking the current stalemate on nuclear disarmament issues.

We also wish to highlight that the progress in non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons should go in parallel to the expansion of international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

While a moratorium on nuclear weapon testing is certainly a measure that is in the interest of our collective security, it is not a substitute for an international legally binding treaty against testing. The non-testing norm cannot be taken for granted and, over time, it must be actively renewed and reinforced. Given our collective failure to adopt a consensus outcome document for the second consecutive time at the 10th NPT Review Conference last year, bringing the CTBT into full legal standing is compelling.

In closing, we join the call of other States Parties in urging those States yet to ratify the CTBT, particularly those States whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force, to finally do so.

We commend the extensive efforts of the Executive Secretary Dr Floyd for his already successful and incremental efforts in this regard, and for the work of the Secretariat.

A nuclear-weapons-free world remains our ultimate goal and the CTBT plays a fundamental part in this process.

I thank you.