

*Delegation from*  
Sri Lanka

*Represented by*  
Frankfurt School of Finance & Management

*Position Paper for General Assembly First Committee (GA 1)*

The topics before the General Assembly First Committee are: Illicit Arms Sales; The Control of Conflict Minerals; and The Privatization of War: Employing and Arming Independent Militias? Sri Lanka strongly supports consensus-based multilateral and collaborative approaches to ensure the World's people's security.

### **I. Illicit Arms Sales**

Through the last decades, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, as many other Member States, has been facing the threat of terrorism by transnational networks mostly armed with small arms and light weapons (SALW) received illicitly. Those small weapons may not threaten humankind itself, but they are chosen in the majority of today's conflicts and therefore pose a very serious threat to the world's people. Ever since the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (UN PoA) was adopted at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in SALW in all its Aspects in July 2001, Sri Lanka has been working on its national implementation. In our region, we were the first country that established a National Commission for implementing the PoA. However, we remind all Member States that the PoA did not recognize the fact that easy access to SALW by non-State actors is the major cause of the majority of today's conflicts and terrorism threats. Thus, we created public awareness of the need for surplus weapons destruction by destroying more than 35,000 small arms at a public event in 2005. We also started collecting military hardware after the successful ending of the conflict in the past year to ensure our citizens' security and to prevent further arms transfers to other non-State actors. As one of the main ports of the region is located in Sri Lanka, we joined the Container Security Initiative in 2005 to prevent sea transfer of illicit arms. Sri Lanka welcomes the actions taken by the UN after adopting the UN PoA, but recalling A/RES/61/66, we want to express our regrets over the fact that the UN Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the PoA held under the presidency of Sri Lanka's former ambassador H.E. Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam was not able to conclude an outcome document due to few who defied a global consensus. We therefore urge all Member States to overcome differences at this year's biennial meeting and to focus on realistic, achievable goals, so that an outcome document finds broader consensus. Furthermore, Sri Lanka wants to remind all Member States that further action has to be taken on the areas of brokering, stockpile management, marking and tracing as well as awareness of special needs of children, women, and victims. We thank the international community for the assistance we have received already, but call to mind that to achieve the common but different goals a common but different financing is necessary. Sri Lanka hopes that Member States will become able to finally de-weaponize security.

### **II. The Control of Conflict Minerals**

With reference to S/RES/1173 the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka strongly supports the international cooperative action resolving the link between commodities and conflict. Sri Lanka commits itself to internationally accepted and commonly practiced frameworks on conflict commodities, like the Kimberly Process certification scheme (KPCS). We believe that this self-regulatory approach of certification concerning the origin of diamonds, through the establishment of common databases and standards of handling throughout each successive processing stage, is an important first step towards solving and preventing the conflicts related with or caused by abundance of natural resources. Moreover, Sri Lanka is supportive of A/RES/62/274 and convinced that self-regulatory approaches of the industries, like the EITI or the Global Compact, are the most effective way of making industries accountable of their supportive actions regarding conflicts in resource-rich countries. We are confident that these self-imposed codes of conduct

will have positive effects on weak states and corrupt governments, which in return will be obliged to support the minimum standards being established by these approaches. Sri Lanka would like to express its hope that the KPCS approach can be expanded onto further natural resources, which have accounted for much violent excess and economic as well as ecological destruction in their countries of origin. Further, we want to take the opportunity to express our deep concerns about too narrow efforts like S/RES/1521. The sanctions on conflict diamonds further fuelled the critical importance of timber in Liberia, accounting for the same conflict chain. A broader consensus between all Member States in this case could have helped to prevent many violent conflicts. Due to the few dissenting states unwilling to comply with the needs of the developing countries, this regrettably was not made possible. Keeping in mind S/RES/1457, for securing transparent and active implementation of certification awarding systems, we encourage the complementation through independent third party support. Still, many succeeding steps of the extraction process of natural resources are solely monitored by local authorities and left to their judgments. Sri Lanka calls upon the international community to address further reasons associated with conflict commodities: shadow states and their overt dependency on natural resources. Many weak governments are strongly dependent on natural resources as their sole source of revenue. A broad taxation base is often lacking and as a result state corruption further undermines the already weak legal framework. These circumstances lead to governmentally fostered and manipulated violent conflicts as a means to maintain control over particular resource-rich areas. In order to break this circle we proclaim the active support of educational measures as well as more part-stately controlled extraction and processing firms in the host countries, generating value added income. Moreover, as a member of the United Nations Forum on Forests we remind Member States that ecological problems should not be neglected or underestimated. Finally, Sri Lanka wants to remind all Member States that an internationally binding and accountable certification scheme is needed to stop the trade of conflict minerals.

### **III. The Privatization of War: Employing and Arming Independent Militias?**

With the end of the Cold War, many States no longer see the need in maintaining large and expensive armies. Recently, this led to successive shift of State Security towards Private Military Companies (PMCs) and Private Security Companies (PSCs), which are controlled by non-State actors. These firms offer a large range of activities like training, consulting, or object guarding, which formerly were under national state control. Due to the use of small arms and weapons these services are cheaper for weak government's and industries' security needs. NGOs repeatedly pointed out that a critical amount of these privately held security firms was responsible for or seriously involved in mercenary activities and running of combat operations. It has to be noted that there is high correlation of arms trade, privatization of national security and natural resources. There is serious evidence that arms trade and conflict commodities financially support each other, as they travel the same routes in opposite direction. We see the threat that both, the strong dependence of governments on natural resources and the rising need for security, could create a culture medium for further violent conflicts. Recalling A/RES/44/34 from 1989, Sri Lanka reaffirms the need of regulation for PMCs and PSCs. We also reaffirm our support of A/HRC/7/L.7/Rev.1, especially regarding the fact that the people of the southern hemisphere have been facing conflicts carried out by mercenaries on pay check of those companies. Sri Lanka took regulatory efforts by implementing the Regulation of Private Security Agencies Act in 1998. Furthermore, Sri Lanka is deeply concerned about the strong relation between those non-State actors and illicit arms transfer as well as the fact that due to the appearance of PMCs some of each countries high-decorated soldiers are attracted to desert from national armies. Sri Lanka welcomes the actions that have been taken by the international community recently, regarding several specific companies, but calls upon all Member States not to forget about the necessity of a global framework for regulation.