

Remarks by the delegation of the Netherlands

Mr. Chairman,

Mr. Secretary, we would like to thank you and through you the Government of the United States for hosting this important conference. As the peace process is unfolding in Sri Lanka the international community has a duty to remain involved and to actively support the ongoing efforts to achieve a lasting peace in Sri Lanka.

The Government of the Netherlands has been encouraged by the progress made so far. It commends all the parties involved for their courage and determination. We want to thank in particular the Government of Norway for its leadership in building the foundations for this peace process.

As negotiations enter a critical stage more challenges lie ahead. It is now more important than ever to stay the course. We urge all parties to seize this opportunity to end twenty years of suffering and to smoothen the ripples of grief. The international community - for its part - also has an important role to play. At the time of the Oslo Conference last fall the Netherlands pledged 10 mln Euro's. We can assure you that the Netherlands will remain fully committed to Sri Lanka and to the peace process.

Mr. Chairman, we are heartened by what has been said here today. Never before have the prospects for peace and reconciliation been better. Let us not squander this unique opportunity. We owe it to the people of Sri Lanka.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.