

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs
Nobel Peace Prize 1995
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Dhanapala Appointed President
of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs**

Bari, Italy, 26 October 2007--At a time of both opportunity and challenge for non-proliferation, the Pugwash Council, meeting in Bari, Italy, has unanimously elected Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka as the new President of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Taking office on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first Pugwash Conference, Dhanapala is the eleventh person to hold this title. He follows in the footsteps of such eminent scientists and thinkers as founder Bertrand Russell, and former presidents Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin, M.S. Swaminathan, and Sir Joseph Rotblat.

On accepting the post, Dhanapala said, "I am deeply honored to assume the Presidency of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs in the 50th anniversary year of this great movement founded on the bedrock of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto. The contribution of Pugwash has been amply recognized by the 1995 award of the Nobel Peace Prize and our challenge now is to build on the achievements of the past to help find solutions to the problems of the present and the future, such as weapons of mass destruction, poverty and climate change. Pugwash is uniquely positioned to do this because of the rich scientific expertise within its membership and the humanist perspective that unites us all."

Pugwash Secretary General Paolo Cotta Ramusino said, "I am looking forward to working closely with Jayantha Dhanapala to promote Pugwash activities aimed at reducing the threat of nuclear weapons and promoting peace and conflict resolution in critical areas where nuclear weapons are present."

Outgoing Pugwash President Dr. M.S. Swaminathan of India said, "I am extremely happy that a disarmament expert of the distinction of Jayantha Dhanapala will serve as President of Pugwash for the next five years. Pugwash under the leadership of Dhanapala will continue to lead the global movement for resolving conflicts through conversation and consensus and for eliminating war as a method of solving disputes."

Dhanapala will work together with the members of the Pugwash Council, a highly distinguished group of 31 internationally-respected scientists and policy figures. Professor Saideh Lotfian of Iran, the new Chair of the Pugwash Council, said, "Pugwash with the help of Dhanapala will be working to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime at this time when the risks and uncertainties of a nuclear war between the nuclear weapons states still persist, and new threats to world security emanate from leaders with no regard for the cost imposed on human society by their disregard for their NPT commitments."

A former UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Dhanapala has had a distinguished career as a national and international diplomat, peace-builder and disarmament expert. Among his many diplomatic successes, Dhanapala was widely acclaimed for his Presidency of the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference, a landmark event in disarmament history.

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