

Explanation of Vote by India on First Committee Resolution L.41

Statement delivered by Ambassador D.B. Venkatesh Varma, Permanent Representative of India to the CD 28 October 2016

India attaches the highest priority to nuclear disarmament and shares with the co-sponsors the widely felt frustration that the international community has not been able to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We also share the deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. India's resolutions in this very forum reflect this concern and the need to take effective legal measures to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons as well as other measures to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons. However, my delegation has been constrained to abstain on this resolution for the following reasons.

2. Disarmament is a Charter responsibility of the UNGA. In exercise of this responsibility the First Special Session on Disarmament of the UNGA established the disarmament machinery with the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum. Nuclear disarmament continues to be on the CD's agenda. We are not convinced that the proposed Conference in 2017 convened under GA rules of procedure can address the longstanding expectation of the international community for a comprehensive instrument on nuclear disarmament.

3. Further, India did not participate in the OEWG which met in Geneva during 2016 and hence reserves its position on its Report and the recommendations therein.

4. India has supported the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention, which in addition to prohibition and elimination also includes verification. International verification would be essential to the global elimination of nuclear weapons, just as it has been in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Progress on nuclear disarmament in the CD should remain an international priority.

5. Mr. Chairman, we would wish to place on record our appreciation for the effort made by some of the cosponsors to reach out to India. Continued dialogue and consultation is necessary to bridge the current divides on nuclear disarmament which remain deep and substantive.
