

Explanation of vote by Mr. D.B.V.Varma, Director, Ministry of External Affairs, on Agenda item 73(d):Towards a nuclear weapon free world : a new agenda, on November 4, 2003

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has requested the floor to explain its position on the draft resolution "Towards a nuclear weapon free world: a new agenda" as contained in document A/C.1/58/L.40/Rev.1. The only consensus document by the international community as a whole is the final document of the Tenth Special Session of the general assembly devoted to disarmament. It contains a programme of action which remains only partially implemented. India believes that any "agenda" for the future would have to take into account, as the starting premise, implementation of the programme of action contained in SSOD-I. It is evident that the international community has achieved a little progress on the most important element which is nuclear disarmament. This raises the question of whether there is a need for a "new agenda" at all when the most important element in the existing agenda remains valid but is yet to be accomplished.

The resolution, cast in NPT framework, includes extraneous elements and formulations that were adopted in other fora. We reject prescriptive approaches to security issues such as those contained in PP18, OP 20, OP 22, OP 23, as they are not relevant to the resolution and do not reflect ground reality. India has already exercised its nuclear option and is a nuclear weapon state with a minimum credible nuclear deterrent. It is not a conferment of status that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant. This is a reality that cannot be denied- a reality that has to be factored into any agenda that seeks to be realistic.

The reference in OP 22 to a nuclear weapons free zone in South Asia not only borders on the unreal, but also calls into question one of the fundamental guiding principles for the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones, namely that arrangements for such zones should be freely arrived at among states of the region concerned. This principle was again endorsed by consensus in the UNDC Guidelines. As we have stated on other occasions, given current realities, the proposals for nuclear weapon free zone in South Asia is no more valid than Nuclear Weapon Free Zones in East Asia, Western Europe or North America.

My delegation's views on NPT are well known. We sympathize with those State Parties that have been striving over the years in vain to get the five nuclear weapon States parties to the NPT to accept concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The resolution is silent on the multifarious sources of proliferation which the NPT has failed to stem.

We believe that all such efforts, however worthy and energetic, would be limited by the intrinsic inequality and discriminatory framework of obligations enshrined in the NPT. As we have maintained a 'New Agenda' cannot succeed in the 'old' framework of the NPT. There is a need to move beyond the old framework towards a durable system of international security, based on the principles on equal and legitimate security for all.

My delegation also shares the objectives of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the need to work for a nuclear weapon free world. However, we remain unconvinced about the utility of an exercise bound by flawed and discriminatory approaches of the NPT. We will, therefore cast a negative vote on the resolution as a whole.

Thank you.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)