

*A55/C.1/L.4.Rev.1: Towards a nuclear weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda*

*Explanation of Vote by Mr. J.S. Mukul, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India in Geneva*

*on November 1, 2000*

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has requested the floor to explain its position before the vote on the draft Resolution. The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament remains the only consensus document on disarmament adopted by the international community as a whole. The Final Document contained a Programme of Action, which remains only partially implemented. Any 'agenda' for the future would necessarily have to take into account as the starting premise the implementation of the Programme of Action contained in SSOD-I. It would be evident that on the most important element – nuclear disarmament – the international community has achieved little progress. The question we need to pose – is there need for a 'new agenda' at all, when the most important element in the existing agenda remains valid and yet to be accomplished ?

We understand the genesis of this Resolution which began with the Joint Declaration issued in Dublin on behalf of eight countries in June 1998. India had welcomed that Declaration. However, this Resolution not only goes far beyond the parameters of the Joint Declaration, it has been totally changed and cast this year in the NPT framework – a framework and agenda that is as old as 1967.

The Resolution includes extraneous elements and formulations that were adopted in other forums. We reject prescriptive approaches concerning security issues, such as those contained in PP4, PP5, OP13, OP14 and OP17 that are not only irrelevant to this Resolution, but also fictional being completely divorced from the reality on the ground. India no longer has a nuclear weapons 'option'. That option has been exercised and India is a nuclear weapon State. This 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 any realistic agenda has to factor in.

The reference in OP17 to nuclear weapon 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 NWFZs, 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 last year. As we have stated on other occasions, given current realities, the proposal for an NWFZ in South Asia is no more valid than NWFZs in East Asia, Western Europe or North America.

Given the omnibus nature of this Resolution, there is a surprising lack of any mention of the doctrines of 'first use' of nuclear weapons. The nuclear doctrine of the only remaining trans-continental military alliance whose security policy is predicated on nuclear weapons, reaffirmed its policy of first use of nuclear weapons. Similarly, the Resolution ignores efforts in certain countries, to refine and modernize nuclear weapons for retention well into this

new century. Even the specific reference to interim measures like 'de-alerting' and removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles have been deleted from the Resolution in an evident attempt to appease the NWS Parties to the NPT. The on-going efforts for building ballistic missile defences could well have the effect of further eroding the international climate conducive for the promotion of disarmament and strengthening of international peace and security. Instead of emphasizing the gravity of these actions which imperil the entire fabric of multilateral disarmament efforts, the resolution has recast most paragraphs to make them more palatable to the NWS Parties to the NPT.

My delegation's view on NPT are well known. The Resolution attempts to revive the sagging fortunes of a Treaty that has disappointed a vast majority of its State Parties. We sympathize with those that have been striving over the years in vain, to get the self-anointed five nuclear weapon State 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 had maintained, any 'new agenda' cannot succeed in an 'old framework' of the NPT. The sponsors of the Resolution this year appear to be reverting to the 'old agenda' in the 'old framework' that is bound to be unsuccessful. The need, therefore, is to move beyond the old framework, towards a durable system of international security, based on the principles of equal and legitimate security for all.

We would have expected that this Resolution include proposals contained in NAM documents starting from the Durban Summit, given that a number of co-sponsors are also members of NAM. The NAM positions include concrete proposals towards a nuclear weapons free world particularly the call for an international conference with the objective of reaching agreement on a phased elimination of nuclear weapons. We would also have preferred the designation of the use of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons as a crime against humanity within the purview of the International Criminal Court.

Although my delegation also shares the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the need to work for a nuclear weapon free world, 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.