

**Statement by Mr. D.B. Venkatesh Varma, Director, Disarmament and  
International Security, Ministry of External Affairs, to introduce the draft resolution  
“Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons” on October 27,  
2003**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to introduce the Resolution entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of Use of Nuclear Weapons” under Agenda item No.74(f) contained in document A/C.1/58/L.36 and co-sponsored by Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Egypt, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Vietnam, Zambia and India.

Mr. Chairman, the draft Resolution being introduced today underlines the need to address the threats to humanity and to international peace and security posed by the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which will persist as long as certain states claim an exclusive right to possess nuclear weapons in perpetuity, claim justification of their use as a legitimate guarantee of their security and continue to develop, produce, stockpile and keep them ready to be used. The possibility of non-state actors also gaining access to nuclear weapons gives an added dimension of urgency.

This spectre of nuclear threats from nations and groups cannot be wished away as long as such weapons are eradicated completely. Only a total prohibition on development, production, stockpiling and use of such weapons and their universal and complete eradication can provide the security that we and our future generations are entitled to.

This threat to humanity needs to be addressed at every possible level. At the political level, a commitment for reorientation of nuclear doctrines towards ‘no first use’ and ‘non-use against non-nuclear weapons’, backed by a legally binding agreement, would be an important and crucial step in de-legitimizing the role of nuclear weapons globally.

The International Court of Justice, in its historic advisory opinion in 1996, made international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons

and provided a legal underpinning for prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. It stated that use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of International Law applicable to armed conflicts. It concluded that “there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Mr. Chairman, the international community should actively participate in a step-by-step process towards concluding a legally-binding Convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. There should remain no scope for justification for the use of use nuclear weapons.

The draft resolution reiterates its request to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as an important step in the process of nuclear disarmament. My delegation hopes that the key delegations to the Conference on Disarmament would show required flexibility to enable it to agree on a programme of work and commence negotiations on this issue.

India remains committed to the goal of global nuclear disarmament. It is in this context that my delegation been bringing before this Committee, since 1982, this resolution calling for a Convention to be negotiated for prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. As we mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Special session of the General Assembly on Disarmament, and its consensus document on ‘Program of Action’, we recall, as a matter of deep concern, the lack of progress in terms of decisive steps towards ridding the world of nuclear weapons. These concerns were once again reiterated in the Final Document of the Kuala Lumpur Summit of the Non-aligned Movement in February this year.

Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation, along with all the delegations that have co-sponsored this resolution, expresses its sincere hope that the resolution will receive the widest possible support in this Committee.

Thank you.

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