

*A55/C.1/L/19: Nuclear Weapon Free Southern Hemisphere and Adjacent Seas*

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

*on October 31, 2000*

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has asked for the floor to explain its vote with regard to OP3 of this resolution which refers to the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in South Asia. This proposal goes contrary to the well established principles regarding the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones, i.e. these zones must be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. The UNDC last year reaffirmed this principle by consensus. There is thus a contradiction in OP3. This contradiction becomes even more apparent when the reference to a nuclear weapon free zone in South Asia is seen against the context of current realities. In fact, if the sponsors of this resolution wish to maintain any semblance of relation to reality, the resolution should explore ways and means of relating NWFZs in the Southern hemisphere to the new realities in South Asia. India will be responsive to the expressed need for commitments from these NWFZs. As we have stated in the past, the proposal for a NWFZ in South Asia has as much validity as NWFZs in East Asia, Western Europe or North America. Given the distortions and contradictions in OP3 we have voted against this para while abstaining on the resolution as a whole.