

**Statement by Mr. Vipul, Counsellor, PMI to CD, Geneva during
the First Committee Thematic Debate on UN Disarmament
Machinery, New York, October 21, 2013**

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches high importance to the UN disarmament machinery established in its present form by the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament, SSOD-I. The triad of disarmament machinery comprising of the First Committee, UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament is the mechanism by which the international community gives expression and coherence to its efforts in the area of disarmament and international security. In recent years the disarmament machinery has faced several challenges to its integrity. We believe that there is a need to recommit ourselves to the machinery even while considering ways to improve its work efficiency.

India associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN, in accordance with its Charter, has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. The First Committee is the embodiment of the faith of the international community in the benefit of collective action and multilateral approaches on disarmament and international security issues. It provides countries with diverse perspectives an opportunity to voice their views on disarmament and international security issues and submit resolutions on issues of priority to them. We are open to suggestions to strengthen the work of the First Committee. We appreciate the observations of the High Representative regarding some such aspects in her statements to this Committee in the past two weeks.

The UN Disarmament Commission is the only universal forum that provides for in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues and can help in building greater understanding and consensus on

issues on the international disarmament agenda. The Commission has produced several important sets of guidelines and recommendations for the General Assembly in the past. However, in its current cycle the Commission struggled to achieve consensus even on its agenda items in 2012. Despite the fact that the General Assembly has decided that nuclear disarmament should remain one of the agenda items for the Commission's meetings, in the current cycle the relevant agenda item could only be agreed to after long deliberations. We believe that if Member States show commitment to the Disarmament Commission, all aspects of nuclear disarmament can be discussed in the Commission, in an inclusive manner. We hope that the UNDC will be able to achieve a substantive result in 2014, the last year of the current cycle.

Mr. Chairman,

India had the privilege of holding the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament during the first part of 2013 session. As the President of the Conference we exerted all possible efforts to enable the CD to commence substantive work. As the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum the CD continues to bear a heavy responsibility to make progress in the international disarmament agenda. We believe that the CD continues to have the mandate, the membership, the credibility and the rules of procedure to discharge its responsibility. Since the decisions of the CD impact national security, it is logical that it conducts its work and adopts its decisions by consensus. We believe that proposals which question the viability or relevance of the CD or even suggest unrealistic alternatives need to be viewed with utmost caution.

India remains committed to efforts, consistent with CD's rules of procedure, aimed at the CD reaching consensus on its Programme of Work to commence early substantive work. India did not stand in the way of the adoption of the CD's decision CD/1956/Rev.1 to establish an Informal Working Group on Programme of Work. However, it would be perverse if the CD were to become a platform for reopening longstanding consensus agreements and for endless procedural debates, which would take it further away from the prospect of early negotiations. In our understanding the Informal

Working Group does not take away anything from the responsibility of the CD President under the rules of procedure to draw up the CD's Programme of Work and present it to the CD for consideration and adoption.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN Secretariat, in particular the ODA, has an important responsibility in assisting States in pursuing the multilateral disarmament agenda. We believe that the ODA should be strengthened to facilitate the implementation of permanent treaty bodies under the UN such as the BWC and CCW. There is also a need to ensure greater coherence between disarmament work in New York and Geneva, such as on small arms and light weapons. It is equally important that the integrity of the CD Secretariat in Geneva is maintained.

The issue of membership of various Group of Governmental Experts constituted by Secretary General has been raised by several delegations this year. India, a major space faring nation, was excluded from the GGE on TCBMs in Outer Space despite having key capabilities and interest in this area. India could have enriched the work of the GGE. We hope that this matter will receive due attention of the Secretariat.

Two related bodies of the UN disarmament machinery which have received much attention this year are UNIDIR and Secretary General's Advisory Board. Both these bodies find their origins in SSOD-I and in their own right play a role in shaping the multilateral disarmament agenda and discharging the important and impartial research function mentioned in SSOD-I. We believe that UNIDIR's autonomy and impartiality should be upheld so that it can fulfill its role of providing in-depth and long term research on disarmament issues, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Secretary General's Advisory Board should be made more representative so that it can reflect the broadest range of perspectives. It should take an inclusive and forward looking approach to global disarmament issues.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to underline that the UN disarmament machinery cannot be looked at in isolation from the urgent need for revitalization and reform of the UN and its principal organs, the General Assembly and the Security Council, to bring them in line with contemporary realities. India would continue to work towards strengthening multilateralism and UN's role in accordance with its Charter.

Thank you.

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