

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

06 October 2016

INDIA STATEMENT

Ambassador D.B. Venkatesh Varma,
Permanent Representative of India to the
Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

Mr. Chairman,

We congratulate you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you and the Bureau of our full support and cooperation. India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

India's support for global, non-discriminatory, verifiable nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner remains firm. This goal can be achieved by a step by step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. A meaningful dialogue among all states possessing nuclear weapons can build trust and confidence. Reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines, with the aim of increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons can be an essential first step. The current complex international environment is in need of measures to enhance strategic trust globally. At the same time, there is need for the international community to stand united against those whose persistent violations increase nuclear threat and proliferation risks.

India considers the Conference on Disarmament as the appropriate forum for the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We supported UNGA resolution 70/34 and Working paper CD/2067 submitted by Member States belonging to the G21 seeking the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention. Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, India supports the commencement of negotiations on FMCT in the CD on the basis of the mandate in CD/1299. India welcomed the adoption by consensus of the Report of the GGE on FMCT established pursuant to UNGA resolution 67/53. We share the widely felt disappointment that one State has continued to block the commencement of such negotiations in the CD.

Mr. Chairman,

As a responsible nuclear power, India's nuclear doctrine continues to stress a policy of credible minimum deterrence with a posture of no-first use and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. We remain committed to maintaining a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive testing.

India supports strengthening global non-proliferation objectives and as such has engaged actively with multilateral export control regimes. During the year, India joined as member of the MTCR and has subscribed to the Hague Code of Conduct.

We have contributed to international efforts in enhancing nuclear safety and security standards through various programmes of the IAEA. We welcome the outcome of the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington on March 31-April 1 2016. The international community should continue to exercise utmost vigilance against terrorist groups gaining access to WMDs and related materials and technologies.

India would be willing to host a Conference in 2018 aimed at strengthening international resolve in facing the challenge of the WMD-Terrorism nexus.

Mr. Chairman,

The CWC and BWC are worthy examples of global non-discriminatory treaties for the complete elimination of the respective categories of weapons of mass destruction. India has completed its obligations on stockpile destruction under the CWC. The timely destruction by other state parties of the remaining stockpiles is critical for upholding the credibility and integrity of the Convention. India contributed to efforts under the UN and the OPCW for the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapon stockpiles. The use of chemical weapons in the ongoing conflict is a matter of concern.

We share the widespread interest among BWC state parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention through a Protocol negotiated for that purpose. We believe this is necessary in view of the new challenges to international peace and security emanating from proliferation trends, including the threat posed by terrorists or other non-state actors seeking access to biological agents or toxins. India is actively participating in the preparatory process leading to the Eighth Review Conference to be held in November 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

As a major space faring nation, India has vital developmental and security interests in space. India supports strengthening the international legal regime to protect and preserve access to space for all and to prevent without exceptions, the weaponization of Outer Space. We

support the substantive consideration of PAROS in the CD. While not a substitute for legally binding instruments, TCBMs can play a useful and complementary role.

India continues to keep under review the ATT from the perspective of our defence, security and foreign policy interests. At the same time, India continues to strengthen its controls over the export of conventional weapon systems and participate in the UN Register on Conventional Arms. India attaches importance to the CCW process and the holding of a productive Review Conference in 2016. We welcome the consensus outcome of the Sixth Biennial Meeting on Implementation of the POA on Small Arms and Light weapons held in June 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

As in previous years, India will be tabling three draft resolutions; namely 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons', 'Reducing Nuclear Danger' and 'Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction' and one draft decision on the 'Role of Science and Technology in the context of International Security and Disarmament.'

We will elaborate on these issues during the thematic debate.

Thank you.