

74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

General Debate of the First Committee

INDIA STATEMENT

BY

Ambassador Pankaj Sharma

**Permanent Representative of India to the
Conference on Disarmament**

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Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of India congratulates you on your assumption of the Chair of the 74th Session of the First Committee and assures you of its full support and cooperation. We associate ourselves with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM.

2. 2019 marks a significant milestone as we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Conference on Disarmament. We need to examine if we have achieved the goals set by the SSOD-I. Most will agree that it has been a mixed record. The global security situation is in a flux. There is concern over the demise of some of the landmark disarmament treaties and agreements and the lowering of the nuclear threshold and the inherent dangers in nuclear brinkmanship, pursued by countries as a

cover for cross-border terrorism. The disarmament machinery has not lived up to our expectations, as evident in the deadlock in the CD for over two decades and the inability of UNDC to hold its substantive session this year. Yet, there is hope and optimism due to our underlying belief in the value of dialogue and cooperation, as highlighted by several distinguished speakers before me.

3. The CD failed in its efforts throughout the year to adopt a Programme of Work. This was the result of the lack of political will and fissiparous tendencies and cannot be attributed to any shortcomings in the rules of procedure. The CD has successfully negotiated important instruments in the past with the same rules of procedure and it can certainly do so in the future. We need to preserve the CD as the sole disarmament negotiating forum and get back to substantive work as per its mandate. India stands ready to work with fellow members on all the core items on CD's agenda. India remains committed to the goal of universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament and has called for complete elimination of nuclear weapons through a step by step process, as outlined in our Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament submitted to the UNGA in 2006 and later to the CD in 2007 (CD/1816), which remains as relevant and valid today as it was then. India would like to reiterate its call to undertake the steps outlined in the Working Paper, including negotiation in the CD of a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention. As in previous years, India will be tabling four draft resolutions; namely 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons', 'Reducing Nuclear Danger',

'Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction' and 'Role of Science and Technology in the context of International Security and Disarmament'.

4. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Without diminishing the priority we attach to disarmament, India supports the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD of a FMCT on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, which remains the most suitable basis for negotiations to commence as reinforced by the deliberation in the GGE on FMCT as well as the High Level Expert Preparatory Group on FMCT.

6. In a related area of our work, India participated in the GGE on Nuclear Disarmament Verification which has made a number of recommendations for further work. PAROS is another important priority on the global agenda. India, having participated in the recent GGE on PAROS, would like to acknowledge the value of its work, even if it could not reach consensus on its outcome. The work of the GGE can serve as a useful basis for future discussions in order to negotiate legally binding instruments as well as TCBMs. We hope that substantive work on these issues would soon begin in the Conference on Disarmament.

7. The importance of full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention can hardly be overemphasized, especially in view of the tragic instances of use of chemical weapons in various parts of the world in the recent years. India attaches immense importance to the Convention and supports the strengthening of the OPCW to enable it to fulfill its mandate. A similar reinforcement is required in the case of BWC, where the Inter-Sessional Process needs authority to take substantive decisions without waiting for the five-year cycle of review conferences. India attaches high importance to the BWC as the first disarmament instrument banning an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. India remains committed to improving the effectiveness of the BWC and strengthening its implementation and universalization.

8. As to the area of conventional weapons, we are pleased to note the successful conclusion of the work of the GGE on UNROCA. We look forward to further discussions in the GGE on LAWS to explore and agree on possible recommendations based on the 11 principles which have enjoyed consensus support in the GGE.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The developments in Science and Technology are taking place at an unprecedented speed and the world is grappling with their potential impact in both civilian and military areas. India has had the honour of tabling a Resolution on this subject at the UNGA First Committee since 2017, which has been adopted by consensus. India would like to thank

the Secretary-General for his reports to the General Assembly on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts. India had the honor to work with Germany, Qatar, Switzerland and UNIDIR to organize a one-day focused seminar in Geneva in August this year as mandated by the UNGA Resolution on the subject.

10. As part of India's commitment to promote arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation education, India has launched an Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship for foreign diplomats starting this year. Inspired by the success and wide appreciation for its content and outreach by the participating countries, we have decided to invite more countries

Mr. Chairman,

11. India believes that this Session of the First Committee, under your able stewardship, will engender greater understanding of the challenges to international security that we are faced with and enable us to find ways to respond effectively to them. We stand ready to work under your leadership for a successful session of the First Committee.

Thank you.