

74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

First Committee

Thematic Debate on Other Disarmament Measures and International Security

India Statement

By

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Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of the delegation of India, I have the honour to introduce under this cluster, draft Resolution L. 16 on the Role of Science and Technology in the context of International Security and Disarmament.

2. To recall the historical context, this issue was first included in agenda of the First Committee in 1988 by India and has been on the agenda since then. Over the years, India has recognized that often science and technology is far ahead of our understanding of disarmament and non-proliferation. The interface between the emerging technologies and their implications on international security is of vital importance, especially in view of the realities of development which call for a synergy with science and technology. It is, therefore, important to view the developments in science and technology from an interdisciplinary and synergetic approach between scientific research, industry, science & technology policy, international security policy, disarmament, non-proliferation & arms control, international law and ethics. Accordingly, India had revamped and re-introduced its resolution, “Role of science and technology in context of international security and disarmament” at the 2017 session of the UNGA First Committee. We are pleased that the resolution was adopted by consensus over the last two years, reflective of the importance that the international community places on this salient subject. The resolution has also attracted an increasing number of co-sponsors from across different regions. The resolution has provided a mechanism for all interested Member States to submit their views on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts. India has also extended support to the Agenda item “Encourage responsible innovation of science and technology”, as part of the UNSG’s Agenda for Disarmament.

3. As mandated by the 2018 resolution, the UN Secretary-General has submitted an updated report in 2019 on the recent developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts. This report, as contained in document A/74/122, touches upon a range of topics such as autonomous technologies, uncrewed aerial vehicles, biology and chemistry, advanced missile technologies, space-based technologies, materials technologies and ICT technologies, providing an update on various activities that have taken place over the year across these domains. A number of countries have submitted their national views, which have been reflected in the report. The report synthesises developments across the multilateral fora in a coherent fashion, providing the much-needed system-wide assessment in this era of rapidly accelerating technological change.

4. In fulfillment of the mandate given by the 2018 resolution, a one-day seminar on the Role of Science and Technology in the context of international security and disarmament was convened by UNIDIR in Geneva on August 19, 2019. India was joined by the Governments of Germany, Qatar and Switzerland in supporting the seminar through voluntary contributions. The seminar was well-attended, attracting participation not only from multilateral disarmament experts, but also representatives from academia and industry. One of the prime take-aways from the seminar was cognizance of the need to conduct more such engagements so as to foster dialogue between policy-makers and practitioners, between diplomats and technocrats and between governments and the private sector.

5. With this objective in mind, in the 2019 resolution, we have proposed that Member States organize events such as conferences, seminars, workshops and exhibitions at national, regional and international levels so as to facilitate dialogue among relevant stakeholders on this topical issue. We hope that these initiatives facilitate a greater understanding of the issues at hand and that Member States can benefit from sharing of experiential learning.

6. In these increasingly challenging times, we believe that science and technology brings all Member States together bypassing cross-regional differences. Given the significance of this cross-cutting and topical subject, it is our sincere hope that the resolution would be adopted by consensus this year as well. We would also encourage Member States to co-sponsor this resolution and join us in this collective endeavour.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
