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भारत

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**STATEMENT
BY
AMBASSADOR D.B. VENKATESH VARMA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, GENEVA
THEMATIC DEBATE ON
NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**AT THE
FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 70TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

NEW YORK

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Mr. Chairman,

India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Nonaligned Movement, which accords the highest priority to nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, reflecting the Final Document of SSOD I, the only truly universal disarmament document. India's Working Paper submitted as CD/1816 recounted a number of past initiatives including the Action Plan of 1988 and enumerated a number of steps leading to a Nuclear Weapons Convention providing for global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified timeframe. As such India has supported the NAM proposal for a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention to be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament.

2. Achieving nuclear disarmament requires a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework. Reducing the role of nuclear weapons is the first step along the path of progressive steps towards their de-legitimization and achieving nuclear disarmament. Increasing restraints on use of nuclear weapons would reduce the probability of their use – whether deliberate, unintentional or accidental India has thus called for a meaningful dialogue among all states possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. The pathways for nuclear disarmament should learn from the experiences gained from the two Conventions eliminating Biological and Chemical Weapons.

3. Strengthening the global objectives of non-proliferation requires the support of all states and the full and effective implementation of obligations arising from the respective agreements and treaties. India is committed to making its contribution including through participation in the multilateral export control regimes. The international community has a vital interest in preventing terrorists from gaining access to nuclear weapons and other sensitive materials and technologies.

4. As a responsible nuclear power India has a policy of credible minimum deterrence based on a No First Use posture and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. We are prepared to convert these into bilateral or multilateral legally binding arrangements. India's position on the NPT is well-known and needs no reiteration. There is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state.

5. Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of an FMCT that meets India's national security interests. The report of the GGE on FMCT confirmed that CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein remains the most suitable basis on which negotiations should commence.

6. The three meetings in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, generated considerable interest on reinvigorating international efforts on addressing the most serious threat to the survival of mankind posed by the use of nuclear weapons. India participated in these meetings in the hope that these would help generate momentum for increased restraints on use of such weapons and thus correct an imbalance in the international legal discourse that has focussed

almost exclusively on restraints on possession. It has been our consistent position that the process should be inclusive and do no harm to the disarmament machinery and in terms of substance promote genuine progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. Current indications are that on both counts the results are far less than expected and it is a matter of regret that some of the proposals tabled this year in this Committee have deepened differences instead of bridging them.

Mr. Chairman,

6. India would like to present on behalf of the sponsors a draft resolution on a Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons. First introduced in 1982 this is one of the long standing resolutions in the First Committee and reflects our belief that a legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons will contribute to the process of the step-by-step de-legitimization of nuclear weapons and create a favourable climate for negotiations on nuclear disarmament. As such it is firmly anchored in the humanitarian tradition of nuclear disarmament and has for many years enjoyed the support of a vast majority of member states. However, some member states which have taken the lead on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons continue to vote against this resolution. There is a serious credibility gap in positions of those who are quick to embrace the humanitarian discourse but strangely enough oppose restraints on use of nuclear weapons by voting against this resolution. We urge them to reconsider their position and narrow the yawning gap between precept and practise that is currently difficult to ignore.

7. The draft resolution on "Reducing Nuclear Danger" highlights the need for a review of nuclear doctrines and the need for steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons. We welcome the greater resonance in the international community on the objectives of this resolution of avoiding unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons..

8. The draft resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" which has enjoyed strong support and large number of co-sponsors reflects the continuing concerns of the international community with respect to the risks posed by terrorists gaining access to WMDs and sensitive materials and technologies. The resolution enumerates a number of measures at the national and international level to address this threat. We hope that the First Committee will adopt this resolution by consensus.

Thank you.