



**INDIA**  
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**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Salman Khurshid**

**Minister of External Affairs of India**

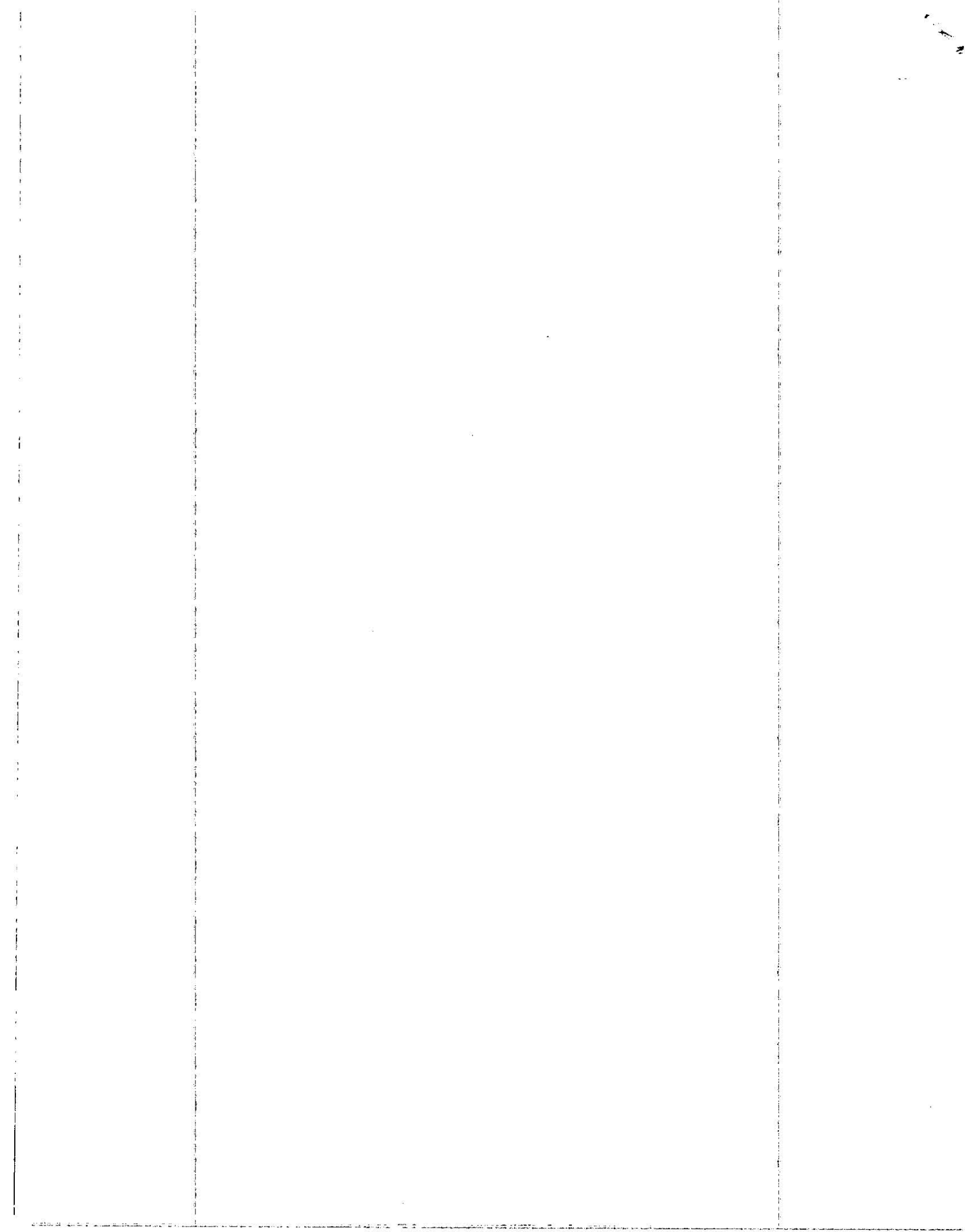
**at the**

**High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament**

**68th United Nations General Assembly**

**New York**

**September 26, 2013**



His Excellency, President of the General Assembly,  
His Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations,  
Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

It is an honour to address this high level gathering on Nuclear Disarmament. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the NAM.

Mr. President, from the days of our freedom struggle, we have been consistent in our support for the global elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our nation, was moved by the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki but remained unshaken in his belief in non-violence. He wrote that he regarded the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children as the most diabolical use of science. More than six decades later, it remains our collective challenge to craft a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world order.

India remains convinced that its security would be strengthened in a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world order. This conviction is based both on principle as well as pragmatism. We believe that the goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is need 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. Progressive steps are needed for the de-legitimization of nuclear weapons paving the way for their complete elimination.

In 1988, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi presented to the UN General a comprehensive Action Plan for a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world order, which if implemented would have rid the world of nuclear weapons by 2008. India's subsequent proposals in the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament are testimony to our consistent support for nuclear disarmament based on the key principles of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time bound manner.

As a responsible nuclear power, we have a credible minimum deterrence policy and a posture of no-first use. We refuse to participate in an arms race, including a nuclear arms race. We are prepared to negotiate a global No-First-Use treaty and our proposal for a Convention banning the use of nuclear weapons remains on the table. As we see no contradiction between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we are also committed to working with the international community to advance our common objectives of non-proliferation, including through strong export controls and membership of the multilateral export regimes.

Mr. President, the Non-Aligned Movement, of which India is a proud founding member, has proposed today the early commencement of negotiations in the CD on nuclear disarmament. We support this call. Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we also support the negotiation in the CD of a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that meets India's national security interests. It should be our collective endeavor to return the CD, which remains the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, to substantive work as early as possible.

Mr. President, this meeting is proof that the international community remains concerned about the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war and the lack of progress in moving toward global nuclear disarmament. In recent years, many initiatives both official and non-governmental have been launched in order to make the vision of a nuclear weapon free world a reality. Simultaneously, there has been a welcome and well-deserved focus on preventing access by non-state actors, in particular terrorists, to weapons of mass destruction and related materials. The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria point to an urgent need for the international community to strengthen restraints on use of weapons of mass destruction and in particular preventing their access to non state actors and terrorists. We hope that our discussions today would galvanize political will and help channel our collective efforts towards the noble goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. To that end, Mr. President, we pledge to you our full support and cooperation.

I thank you.