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Statement

by

**Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao,
Permanent Representative of India
to the Conference on Disarmament,
Geneva**

at the

**General Debate of the First Committee of the 64th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York

October 8, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure to convey to you our congratulations on your election to the Chairmanship of this Committee and we assure you the full cooperation of the Indian delegation. We would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We commence this year's First Committee deliberations against the background of not only multiple challenges to global peace and security but an accompanying mood of optimism as well that we can find viable and enduring solutions through collective efforts underlined by a genuine spirit of multilateralism. In achieving this objective, as provided by the UN Charter, the General Assembly and the First Committee, dealing with international security and disarmament issues, can play a vital and substantive role.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. During the 63rd Session of the UNGA, India's Prime Minister reiterated our proposal for a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and providing for their complete elimination within a specified timeframe. Our policy is consistent with the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament enshrined in the Final Document of SSOD-I and in the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed the same objectives during its recent summit at Sharm-el Sheikh.

We believe that just as it was possible to prohibit chemical and biological weapons, through non-discriminatory and global international conventions, achievement of non-discriminatory, global nuclear disarmament is not only possible but that global security would be enhanced by a nuclear weapon free world. Such a vision brings together principle and pragmatism. India welcomes the active debate amongst scholars and statesmen on nuclear disarmament and a number of initiatives launched to add new life to the global disarmament agenda, including by the UNSG in October last year. There are some encouraging signs, including the declared intention of the United States and Russia to negotiate further cuts in their nuclear arsenals as well as the willingness of the United States, as indicated in President Obama's statement in Prague in April this year, to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy.

The goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes but the overall goal of nuclear disarmament should not be held hostage to nuclear non-proliferation. At the same, we must ensure that non - proliferation objectives are achieved through concerted and cooperative international efforts. Expansion of nuclear energy, which is vital to ensure global energy security and to combat climate change, must be ensured in a manner that does not enhance proliferation risks.

To take forward the global debate on nuclear disarmament, India has suggested the following measures:

- Reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear weapon States to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons;
- Reduction of the salience of nuclear weapons in the security doctrines;
- Taking into account the global reach and menace of nuclear weapons, adoption of measures by nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear danger, including the risks of accidental nuclear war, de-alerting of nuclear-weapons to prevent unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons.
- Negotiation of a global agreement among nuclear weapon States on 'no-First-use' of nuclear-weapons;
- Negotiation of a universal and legally-binding agreement on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States.
- Negotiation of a Convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
- Negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified timeframe.

Mr. Chairman,

During its 2009 Annual Session, the Conference on Disarmament reached consensus on a Programme of Work, an important milestone, after more than a decade of impasse. We share the disappointment that the Conference was, thereafter, unable to get down to substantive work. As the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the CD bears a responsibility to meaningfully respond to the international community's expectations in the disarmament field, particularly on the priority issue of nuclear disarmament.

India is committed to participating constructively in the FMCT negotiations in the CD as part of its Programme of Work. Our Prime Minister stated on 13th August, 2006 that India is willing to join only a non-discriminatory, multilaterally negotiated and internationally verifiable FMCT as and when it is concluded in the Conference on Disarmament, provided our security interests are fully addressed. India is a nuclear weapon state and a responsible member of the world community, and would approach these negotiations as such.

India continues to attach importance to addressing wide-spread international demands for conclusion of an agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. As part of its minimum nuclear deterrent, India has espoused the policy of 'No First Use' and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states and is prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements. India is committed to maintaining its voluntary, unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing.

India would support continuing international efforts to strengthen the international legal framework to ensure the safety and security of space assets and to prevent the weaponization of outer space. Issues relating to the possession and use of missiles should be addressed in a sustainable and comprehensive manner through a global process based on the principle of equal and legitimate security.

India attaches importance to the continuing role of the UN in addressing conventional arms control, including regulation of small arms and light weapons in view of the nexus between small arms proliferation and terrorism. We remain strongly committed to the CCW process as being vitally important in strengthening regulation of armed conflict and international humanitarian law. India has ratified all the five protocols. It will be India's honour to Chair the Annual meeting of States Parties to Protocol V in November this year.

Last year, India welcomed the opening of the new UN Regional Centre for peace and Disarmament in Asia and Pacific in Kathmandu. India will extend all possible support for the Kathmandu Centre to fulfill its mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

As in the previous year, India seeks the support of the First Committee for the following three resolutions:

- a) Convention on the Prohibition of Use of Nuclear Weapons
- b) Reducing Nuclear Danger
- c) Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction:

We will be making more detailed statements to introduce these resolutions during the time allocated for that purpose.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to assure you of our full support in ensuring the success of this year's deliberations.
