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Statement by

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on Disarmament**

At the

**Thematic Debate on Other Disarmament Measures
and International Security**

**First Committee
72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. Chairman,

This year my delegation has the honour to introduce under this theme the draft resolution L.52 on the Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament.

Science and technology has transformed our world and brought us unprecedented economic growth, food security and ease of communication and travel. Scientific and technological endeavours have also erased many of the world's divides and given us, especially our youth, common aspirations and a common vocabulary. The potential of S&T for resolving the world's most intractable problems such as clean and affordable energy is immense and science can help the UN system progress on all SDGs.

At the same time, as the UNSG pointed out in his opening address to this session of the UNGA, the dark side of innovation is moving from the frontier to the front door. We need to ensure that we have the correct understanding of the latest developments in science and technology so that our practice in multilateral forums can adjust accordingly. We call on this Committee to lend its support to this resolution which calls for a comprehensive study of developments in Science & Technology that could impact the general context as well as specific domains of the United Nations system's activities in the area of international security and disarmament.

As the lead sponsor of this resolution, the Indian delegation believes that such a study can be carried out through a Panel on Science & Security set up by the UNSG. The mandate of such a Panel could include inter-alia:

- A survey of the current S&T developments in emerging areas such as Information & Communication Technology (ICT); Biotechnology, including synthetic biology and genetics; Artificial Intelligence & Autonomous Systems; Outer Space; Directed energy systems; New materials and additive manufacturing. The focus should in particular be on 21st century latest technologies, which enjoy growing civilian applications and could be repurposed for military uses.
- An assessment of the challenges and areas of concern related to the use of such technologies for military purposes while recognizing that it is the prerogative of all States to use science & technology for national security in exercise of their right to self-defence. This assessment shall also take into account how existing multilateral forums are dealing with such concerns, so as to avoid duplication and to instead focus on the gaps and cross-connections between and among the relevant forums. The potential application of such technologies for enhancing assurance levels and lowering costs of verification of disarmament and arms control agreements could also be assessed.
- An assessment of how potential opportunities can be seized, including those for strengthening verification and how emerging challenges can be better addressed. This could also include measures for follow-up by Member States as well as the UN Secretariat, especially through regular follow-up in existing mechanisms such as the UNSG's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters as well as inter-governmental forums such as the UNDC.

The Panel shall be composed of a maximum of 18 independent experts, drawn from the relevant areas of scientific research, industry, science policy, international security policy, disarmament, non-proliferation & arms control, international law and ethics. The experts should be broadly representative, particularly in terms of geographical origin and gender balance, and should be well-recognised in their respective domains as thought leaders. It is important that the younger generation of technology leaders find a place on the Panel. All experts shall serve in their individual and honorary capacity. The UNSG could invite one of the experts to Chair the Panel and appoint a secretary from

within the UN Secretariat to assist the panel. As stated in the resolution, UNIDIR could assist the Panel in carrying out its work so as to further reinforce existing linkages.

As regard conduct of work, the Panel shall follow established practice and the Chair shall organize the work of the Panel as appropriate in consultation with the other experts. The study shall be completed in two years (2018-2019). The panel shall meet for 5 days each in 2018 and 2019 at the UN Office in Geneva and at UN headquarters in New York respectively. Apart from these physical meetings, the panel shall hold virtual meetings at regular intervals. The Panel may invite inputs from relevant international organisations, UN agencies and departments such as IAEA, UNOOSA, OPCW, UNESCO, UNIDO, ITU, WIPO, UNCTAD and UNITAR. A webpage shall also be set up, under the responsibility of the Chair, for inviting comments from industry associations and civil society. It would be useful for the Chair or a designated expert to brief the UN member States and provide information about the progress of their work, taking advantage of a session of the First Committee, UNDC or the CD. The UNSG shall submit a final report containing the assessments of the Panel for the consideration of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation believes that S&T should continue to shape our future and should bring us together and not divide us. Challenges related to the military applications of advances in science & technology should be tackled, first and foremost with a nuanced understanding of what these developments are and how they interface with existing mechanisms and instruments on international security and disarmament. Our approach should be anchored in humility starting with 'we don't know and we don't even know what we don't know' and we should proceed step-by-step from there. Proceed we must because the fast pace of S&T advances brooks no delay.

Thank you.