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**PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

Statement by

Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill

**Permanent Representative of India to the
Conference on Disarmament**

at the High-level Segment

Monday, 26 February 2018

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Ambassador & Permanent Representative of India
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Madam President, It is a great pleasure for my country to see you chair the Conference on Disarmament. Sweden and India have been comrades in arms on many disarmament issues in the past and we pledge you our full cooperation. It is also a great pleasure to see the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Ms Izumi Nakamitsu and it was an honour to listen to the address by the Secretary General earlier today.

Excellencies, distinguished friends,

My delegation remains convinced that enduring solutions to our common problems of peace and security can only be found through multilateralism and a continued commitment to the ideals enshrined in the UN Charter. The UN continues to have a central role and the primary responsibility for advancing multilateral disarmament. In this regard, we welcome the intention of the UNSG to develop a new initiative for restoring the role of the UN in disarmament and to forge a new momentum for nuclear disarmament.

The disarmament machinery established by the first Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-I) has been criticized in recent years for lack of substantive outcomes. Developments in the past one year have underlined the continued importance of this machinery, in particular the triad of the First Committee, the UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. If we look back at what has been achieved since April last year, we can note that there is a certain trend, there is a certain accumulation of positive developments whether it was the first adoption of a substantive outcome by consensus in the UNDC after a gap of 18 years last year, or the consensus outcome at the BWC Meeting of States Parties in December last year or indeed the agreement on the agenda for the SSOD IV. The tide therefore is turning and it is our responsibility to pull together on the oars. Notwithstanding the current difficulties, the CD in the historical sense of a limited membership negotiating body on disarmament remains a unique institution. It brings together in full equality and responsibility all militarily significant States, in particular all States possessing nuclear weapons. It has the mandate, the membership and the rules for embarking on negotiations of

legally-binding instruments of universal application that can strengthen international peace and security.

My delegation is particularly pleased with the decision adopted on 16 February under the able chairmanship of the Sri Lankan Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha to advance the substantive work of the Conference. It may seem like a modest step in the light of recent history and it may still be derailed by security exclusivism and trust deficits. However, if all of us engage in good faith in each and every subsidiary body established by the decision, we can deliver on the triple mandate accorded to each of them, namely, reaching understanding on areas of commonality, deepening technical discussions, including through the participation of technical experts and thus broadening areas of agreement as well as considering effective measures, including legal instruments for negotiations. We hope that the CD will begin negotiations on one or more legally-binding instruments either by building on this decision or through a programme of work with one or more negotiating mandates.

There are other opportunities this year to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects as well as other pressing items on the international security agenda. The High-Level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament will be held in New York from 14-16 May upon an initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement. We hope that we can use this platform to rebuild trust among all States and create common ground towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

For its part, India remains committed to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. We support the proposal for the negotiation of a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention in the Conference on Disarmament. Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We will also support measures to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security policies and doctrines, including through measures such as de-alerting and a global no first use agreement.

The High-level Expert Preparatory Group on the FMCT and two new GGEs – on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space will be meeting this year. All three issues are among the core agenda items which will be considered by the subsidiary bodies set up by the recent decision of the CD. It is important to pull together these strands of

substantive work and weave them into a coherent whole. This year is also an important opportunity to review the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons are mass killers. They continue to circulate in grey markets and are used by terrorists and international criminals to wreak mayhem. We expect to make important progress on combating illicit trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons under the able presidency of France.

My delegation is pleased that there is now an opportunity to address emerging issues under a formal subsidiary body of the CD. We welcome the UNSG's interest in new technologies and their impact on international security and disarmament discussions. My delegation was pleased to sponsor a new initiative at the last session of the General Assembly by introducing resolution 72/28 on the role of Science and Technology. It is an opportunity for member States to contribute their views for the UNSG's report. We hope that these views will help the UNSG prepare a comprehensive report on the issue for the next session of the General Assembly.

We are also pleased that the important and highly relevant topic of S&T issues will feature in the first set of Meetings of Experts under the new ISP adopted by the Meeting of States Parties of the BWC in December 2017. The meetings this year are an opportunity and I quote, "to be prudently creative in finding ways to strengthen this important international framework" unquote. This has been recently conveyed by the Chair of the 2018 MSP of the BWC in his letter which starts substantive preparations for the meetings in August and December this year.

Likewise, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will continue to build on the consensus outcome of the November 2017 meeting and we expect that the relevant discussions in the CD will take place without prejudice to the work in the CCW on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.

To conclude Madam President, this is an important moment, if we keep the focus on substance, display the necessary flexibility and work together using the tools at our disposal, we can revitalize the disarmament machinery and advance our collective security. In an interdependent and multipolar world, we have no alternative but to strengthen the multilateral ideal and its institutions, including this august body.