

Statement by Ambassador Pankaj Sharma, Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva at the Thematic Debate of the First Committee of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, 13 October 2021

Mr. Chair

The global peace and security faces multiple and evolving threats – including weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and cyber threats. The UN Disarmament machinery established by the SSOD-1 has a crucial role to play in addressing these threats and reducing the growing tensions among member States.

The UN, in accordance with its Charter, has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. The UN General Assembly, in its very first resolution in 1946, adopted unanimously, sought the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other weapons adaptable to mass destruction and to the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Chair

India has been unwavering in its commitment to the goal of universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. India's proposal for a step-by-step approach for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, contained in our Working Paper submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in 2007, calls on the CD to negotiate a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Without prejudice to the priority that we attach to nuclear disarmament, we also support the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD of a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.

Mr. Chair

India, is a responsible nuclear weapon State and as per its nuclear doctrine, follows a policy of maintaining a 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 undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements. India remains committed to commencing negotiations on all three core issues related to nuclear disarmament in the CD and hopes that the CD will muster the political will to do so. India also remains committed to maintaining a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive testing.

India has also called for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on PAROS to address the global concerns related to space security.

India's annual resolution in the UNGA requests the CD to commence negotiations on a "Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons."

Another UNGA resolution by India on 'Reducing Nuclear Danger', has drawn global attention to the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons carrying unacceptable risks of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, that would have catastrophic consequences for all humankind.

Mr. Chair

India attaches high importance to the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and supports the strengthening of the OPCW to discharge its mandate. India maintains that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anybody and under any circumstances cannot be justified and the perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable.

India accords high priority to the universalisation and full and effective implementation of the BWC as well as further strengthening of the Convention through the negotiation of a comprehensive and legally binding protocol. We hope that the upcoming Ninth Review Conference will achieve tangible outcomes.

Similarly, India expects concrete outcomes from the Sixth Review Conference of the CCW to be held later this year, in order to further strengthen the Convention.

As to ICT, India is committed to promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful ICT environment and hopes that the new OEWG functions as a democratic, transparent and inclusive platform for addressing the existing and emerging challenges in the use and security of ICT.

Mr Chair

The UNGA, since 2002, has adopted an annual resolution by consensus on "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction". This resolution tabled by India reflects the continuing concerns of the international community in this regard and the need to take effective steps to counter them.

India seeks the support of Member States as cosponsors towards these important initiatives manifest in the form of our annual resolutions under these clusters and looks forward to working with fellow Member States in order to enhance global peace and security.

Thank you.