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

Statement on agenda item V: New Types of Weapons of Mass
Destruction and New Systems of such Weapons –
Radiological Weapons

By

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Mr. President,

I would like to compliment you for the excellent organization and exemplary conduct of the structured discussions last week on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. They effectively highlighted the likely consequences of any threat to the security of space-based assets. They also focused on the steps required to ensure that peaceful applications of outer space, whether civilian or military, are not imperilled and to avoid a situation that could lead to an arms race in outer space.

2. As we take up, this week, consideration of yet another item on our agenda, we hope that our present discussions in the Conference will enable us to evolve consensus on its programme of work and begin substantive work keeping in view the concerns and priorities of all the member States. Since the subject for today's discussion, new types of weapons of mass destruction, has a broad coverage, I am going to confine my remarks to radiological weapons.

Mr. President,

3. Over recent years, we have become painfully aware of the growing terrorist threat to our security. Using conventional explosives, including improvised explosive devices, terrorists have wreaked havoc in our societies. We can well imagine the consequences if they were to access and use weapons of mass destruction. This is no longer an imaginary threat, but a looming possibility today. Terrorist organizations have expressed interest in and have made determined efforts to acquire materials and technology for weapons of mass destruction. Were they to succeed in acquiring biological agents or toxic chemicals or fissile materials, there is little doubt that they would try to build weapons, which they would not hesitate to use in order to cause terror and destruction.

4. Aware of this danger, the international community has resolved to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. The General Assembly has adopted, by consensus, since its 57th Session in 2002, the resolution on "Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction", tabled by India and co-sponsored by a growing number of States members of the Conference. Again by consensus, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1540 in 2004. This criminalizes the proliferation by and to non-

State actors of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery. It has spurred several States to take new measures or to strengthen the existing measures to effectively prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

5. Last year, the UN General Assembly adopted the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Article 2 of the Convention provides that it is an offence if a person unlawfully and intentionally possesses radioactive material or makes or possesses a device with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury or to cause substantial damage to property or the environment. The Convention enjoins the States Parties to adopt measures to establish as criminal acts the offences set forth in the Convention and mandates prosecution or extradition of individuals who commit offences within the meaning of the Convention.

6. While terrorists gaining access to fissile material for building and using a crude nuclear device remains a distinct prospect, an even more alarming and, perhaps, a more likely possibility, is that of a terrorist using a dirty bomb or a radiological dispersion device. This can both kill and spread panic and terror, disrupting civic life and causing economic dislocation.

7. The international community has recognized the need to protect and secure radiological materials because of the increasing global concern that terrorists could use these. The International Atomic Energy Agency has buttressed its preventive activities in helping States improve the regulatory framework for nuclear security. The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material has been broadened and strengthened, as also the Code of Conduct for Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. India actively participated in the exercise last year to amend and strengthen the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. India has also participated in the Regional Radiological Security Initiative and has been conducting courses in India on a regular basis. The courses are under the aegis of IAEA and focus on issues related to the security of radiological sources and materials and locating orphan radioactive sources in countries that are unable to effectively deal with them and that seek IAEA assistance for the purpose.

8. While fully supportive of the steps taken by the IAEA, the Conference needs also to keep the issue of radiological weapons under active consideration. The last time the Conference gave this matter serious thought was in the summer of 2002, when the German Presidency had initiated fresh discussions on the subject against the backdrop of emerging threats, especially the possibility that a 'dirty-bomb' could become a terrorist's weapons of choice. The issue of radiological weapons has been on the agenda of the Conference since 1979, following the call by the General Assembly the previous year for a convention preventing their development, production, stockpiling and use. The issue was considered in working groups during 1980-83 and in Ad-hoc Committees during 1984-1992.

9. While it is unlikely that any State would resort to developing, producing and using radiological weapons, the threat of their use by terrorists is now well recognized and we see merit in Conference reaching an understanding on banning radiological weapons, and forswearing the development of such weapons in the future. Such a step would supplement the ongoing national and international efforts for ensuring effective protection and control over radioactive materials and preventing terrorists from gaining access to them.

Mr. President,

10. India is prepared to engage in exploring the most effective way in which the Conference can contribute to and reinforce the efforts already being undertaken by other bodies to address the issues associated with the threat of radiological weapons.