

## **Remarks by Ambassador Jayant Prasad at the Plenary Meeting on the Presidential Proposal for a draft decision at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, 23 March 2007**

23/03/2007

Madame President,

Since we are meeting in the formal plenary, my delegation would once again wish to congratulate you heartily on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference at this critical juncture of its history. We would like to thank in particular Ambassador Mtshali of South Africa and Ambassador March of Spain, your two predecessors this year, who conducted themselves in an exemplary manner in chairing the Conference. We would also like to convey a warm word of welcome to our new and highly erudite colleague from Nigeria who will add to the collective wisdom of the Conference.

2. We welcome the unveiling of document L.1 on CD's programme of work, which contains the collective wisdom of the six presidencies for 2007. I shall promptly transmit this proposal to my government for careful consideration, advice and instructions.

3. In its general approach, the proposal before us takes on board all the core issues before the Conference and, in that respect, inherits the spirit of the other proposals on the table that enjoyed a broad measure of support within the Conference. This inclusion of four core issues in CD's future programme of work shows a collective willingness to take into account the concerns and priorities of all the constituents of the Conference.

4. We note, however, that in terms of the specific mandates, the treatment of the four issues is markedly different. In this context, we would like to reiterate our consistent position, in respect of an FMCT, of the importance we attach to the negotiation of a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty. There should, therefore, be sufficient understanding on fundamental parameters before formal negotiations are launched.

5. Another change in the P-6 proposal is the manner in which the four issues are to be substantively dealt with by the Conference. Our task would be considerably facilitated if the procedure of working through Coordinators appointed by the Conference is given, what you described earlier this afternoon, "a more structured form." This can be done easily by carefully spelling out the working methods and reporting mechanisms, which must conform to the rules of procedure of the Conference. We are seeking greater clarity on this issue only to ensure that it will advance the next phase of work of the Conference.

6. India has a multilateral vocation and is ready to participate in the substantive work of the Conference, should it decide on appropriate parameters and methods to do so by consensus.