

Statement by India**during the thematic debate on Nuclear Weapons****at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, New York, October 2021**

UN Member States embraced collectively in the final outcome document of the tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (SSOD-1), that the ending of the arms race and the achievement of real disarmament are tasks of primary importance and urgency. After four decades, the international community is yet to effectively meet the historic challenge and shared objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, though some progress has been made. India believes that effective and reformed multilateralism with a strong and reliable UN at its core is capable of achieving solutions to problems of international peace and security.

2. India's voice and active role, for the past several decades, in the global efforts towards disarmament is well known. In 1954, India was the first country in the world to call for a ban on nuclear testing. In 1965, India's call for a non-discriminatory treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as distinct from non-dissemination is yet another testimony to India's prescience.

3. India is unequivocal in its commitment to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. Fully cognizant that disarmament can be achieved through a steady, gradual and effective process, India's Working Paper submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in 2007, CD/1816 envisions a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework, based on the following elements:

- Reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear weapon States to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons;
- Reduction of the salience of nuclear weapons in the security doctrines;
- Measures by nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear danger, including the risks of accidental nuclear war, de-alerting of nuclear-weapons to prevent unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons;
- Negotiation of a global agreement among nuclear weapon States on 'no-first-use' of nuclear-weapons;
- Negotiation of a universal and legally-binding agreement on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States;
- Negotiation of a Convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
- Negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified timeframe.

4. In line with our vision, India has supported the negotiation of a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention in the CD. Furthermore, India's annual resolution, on a "Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons", tabled since 1982 in the UNGA requests the CD to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Our annual resolution on 'Reducing Nuclear Danger', tabled since 1988 in the UNGA, has drawn much-needed global attention to the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons and calls for steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons. India presents the two aforementioned resolutions in this Cluster and seeks the continued kind support of all Member States for their adoption.

5. As a responsible nuclear weapons State, India has 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. India is prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements. Furthermore, India remains committed to maintaining a unilateral voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive testing. 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.

6. India would like to reiterate that the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, negotiated outside the CD, does not create any obligations for India. India believes that this Treaty, in no way constitutes or contributes to the development of any customary international law. However, India stands ready to work with all countries to achieve our shared goal of nuclear disarmament.

7. India strongly supports the upholding and strengthening of global non-proliferation objectives. The international community has a vital interest in preventing terrorists and non-state actors from gaining access to nuclear weapons, sensitive materials and technologies and in isolating States which harbor and provide support to terrorists based on their soil. The international community must take a firm and united stand against those who indulge in nuclear threats or benefit from clandestine proliferation linkages.

8. India believes that a climate of trust and confidence coupled with political will and intensified dialogue among States will help achieve consensus towards the shared objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. India stands ready to work with all Member States in achieving this noble goal.
