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Statement

by

**Hon'ble Mr. Saleem Iqbal Shervani
Member of Parliament
and Member of the Indian Delegation**

at the
58th Session of the

**First Committee
United Nations General Assembly**

New York

October 21, 2003

Statement by Hon'ble Mr, Saleem I. Shervani to introduce the resolution
"Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction"

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to introduce the Resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" under Agenda item No.73(W) contained in document No. A/C.1/58.L35 and co-sponsored by Afghanistan, Bhutan, Colombia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and India.

India first introduced this resolution in the 57th General Assembly to give expression to the widely shared concern of the international community about the heightened dangers posed by the risk of terrorists getting access to weapons of mass destruction or related material and technology. In recognition of this threat, the Resolution aimed at underlining the urgent need to deal with it, at the national, regional and global levels.

The adoption of Resolution 57/83 without vote, was a measure of the wide spread support for this resolution, reflective of the shared concerns of the international community and the common determination to combat terrorism, in particular its linkages with WMD.

The Report of the Secretary General (A/58/208) as well as its addendum pursuant to resolution 57/83, includes views submitted by member states and the work undertaken by relevant international organizations.

Events since we met last year, have only underlined the growing concern of the international community over this threat. There is a growing recognition by the international community of the threat posed by terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction and the urgent need to prevent it.

These concerns have been reflected in the statements of the UNSG, the work of his Disarmament Advisory Board, the Kuala Lumpur NAM Summit Final Document and in the deliberations of Regional organizations and other groupings. The IAEA and the OPCW are among several international organizations which have focused on this threat.

Mr. Chairman, it cannot be ruled out that terrorists and other non-state actors, in networks that span the globe, may gain access to weapons of mass destruction, related materials and technologies. We cannot underestimate the threat nor can there be expectation of advance warning in all cases. Nor can we afford to wait for such a catastrophic incident to take place, or its horrific aftermath, to spur us into action. We have a collective responsibility as well as interest in prevention. Our collective position will in fact send a strong deterrent signal to those forces contemplating such threats.

This is not a problem that is country or region specific, but has global reach and implications. Therefore, it requires a collective effort, through a truly multilateral approach that would increase the chances of it being accepted and

supported by the widest possible constituency, thereby also ensuring its effectiveness.

We believe that the threat of WMD-terrorism will require concerted action at multiple levels-increasing and strengthening national capacities, as well as new levels and forms of regional and international cooperation, only as part of a comprehensive global effort to prevent terrorists from acquiring WMD.

We hope that this Resolution will act as a platform for fostering greater understanding as well as impetus for joint action before this threat rears its ugly head.

Chairman, the Indian delegation, along with the co-sponsors, expresses its sincere hope that the draft resolution will receive the support of all the delegations and would be adopted by the Committee without a vote. Thank you Mr. Chairman.