

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Hamid Ali Rao, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament, at the Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons at the First Committee of the 64<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly, New York, October 15, 2009**

Mr. Chairman,

It gives me pleasure to convey how pleased we are to see you chairing the thematic debate on Nuclear Weapons. India associates itself with the statement on this Cluster by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM.

India has consistently maintained its principled position- it attaches the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament, both as a national position which has enjoyed strong and consistent domestic support as well as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, which has stood steadfast in its support for global nuclear disarmament. In this context, we recall that the only document on Nuclear Disarmament adopted by consensus by the international community – the Final Document of SSOD I accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988 provided a holistic framework for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons to usher in a world free of nuclear weapons and rooted in non-violence. We remain committed to that objective.

Speaking at the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh reiterated India's proposal for a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and providing for their complete elimination within a specified time frame. India's External Affairs Minister again underlined India's support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention during his address to the UNGA last month.

India has consistently maintained that nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step by step process underwritten by a universal commitment for global elimination of nuclear weapons. In a working paper submitted to the UNGA in 2006, India suggested a number of measures in this regard, including reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment by all nuclear weapon states to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Consideration could also be given to specific legal measures, including a Global No First Use Agreement and negotiation of a Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear weapons. Measures to reduce nuclear dangers arising from accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons are also pertinent in this regard.

Addressing the threat posed by all nuclear weapons to international peace and security, requires the global elimination of nuclear weapons on a

non-discriminatory basis. It is clear that while preventing proliferation is important we must not lose sight of the essential principle of the mutually reinforcing linkage between disarmament and non-proliferation. As such, nuclear disarmament cannot be held hostage to absolute success in the non-proliferation field. International efforts in this regard should build the necessary confidence among states so that international treaties and agreements are multilaterally negotiated and freely accepted which remains the true test of their legitimacy and credibility. At the same time, states should fully and effectively implement the obligations arising from the agreements or treaties to which they are parties.

India has acceded to and is in full implementation of the two non-discriminatory International Conventions banning Biological and Chemical Weapons. India's position on the NPT is well-known. There is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. Nuclear weapons are an integral part of India's national security and will remain so, pending non-discriminatory and global nuclear disarmament.

As part of its credible minimum nuclear deterrent, India has espoused the policy of 'No First Use' against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states and is prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements.

As the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the CD bears a responsibility to meaningfully respond to the international community's expectations in the disarmament field, particularly on the priority issue of nuclear disarmament. As a nuclear weapon state and a responsible member of the world community, India is committed to participating constructively in the FMCT negotiations in the CD as part of its Programme of Work.

India welcomes the renewed attention of the international community on achieving a nuclear weapon free world. World leaders, Parliamentarians, distinguished statesman, international groups and NGOs have lent their voice in favor of nuclear disarmament. The shifting currents of informed opinion are now moving in favor of Nuclear Disarmament. As the embodiment of multilateralism, the UN should carry forward this momentum, in recognition of which the UN Secretary General put forward his 5 Point Plan, which inter-alia also includes consideration of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. To sustain the current mood of optimism, follow up action on the ground will be needed, based on a genuine desire to take concrete steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, measures to reduce nuclear dangers and universal commitments for global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

The threat of nuclear terrorism is a formidable challenge facing the international community. We support the strengthening international efforts to address this threat, including improving nuclear security. In this context, we welcome the US initiative to convene a Global Summit on Nuclear Security in 2010.

As in previous years, India will be sponsoring the following resolutions.

First, on behalf of the co-sponsors, I would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons." This resolution reflects the belief that a multilateral, universal and legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons will contribute to the process of de-legitimization of nuclear weapons and create a climate for negotiations for an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. The operative part of the resolution reiterates the call on the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention on prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

I also have the honor to introduce on behalf of the co-sponsors the draft resolution on "Reducing Nuclear Danger." This resolution highlights that the hair-trigger posture of nuclear forces carries the unacceptable risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, which could have catastrophic consequences. The operative part of the resolution calls for a review of nuclear doctrines, as also immediate steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through the de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons. It is a matter of satisfaction that the issues addressed by this resolution have gained greater recognition and acceptance in the international community and we hope that those delegations which had difficulties in the past will reconsider their position in light of these new trends.

On the behalf of co-sponsors, India is tabling, as in previous years, a draft resolution on "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction." This resolution highlights the concerns of the international community and calls upon all Member states to take measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It underlines that the international response to this threat needs to be at national, multilateral and global level. We hope, as in the past, this resolution will be adopted by consensus and receive the co-sponsorship of an increasing group of countries.

Thank you.