

Statement by Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao of India
First Committee thematic discussion on the UN Disarmament Machinery
23 October 2009

Mr. Chairman,

The UN, in accordance with its Charter, has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. This Committee is the embodiment of our faith in the benefits of collective action and of multilateral approaches in resolving global issues concerning international security and disarmament.

As the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, there is a heavy responsibility on the Conference on Disarmament to make progress on the international disarmament agenda. We remain committed to efforts, consistent with the rules of procedure, aimed at the CD reaching consensus on its Programme of Work to commence early substantive work. Since its decisions impact on national security of its member states, it is logical that the CD conduct its work and adopt its decision by consensus.

India attaches high importance to the UNDC, which is the deliberative leg of the triad of the disarmament machinery put in place by consensus by SSOD I. As the universal deliberative forum, it provides for in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues for submission of recommendations to the General Assembly and can help bring back coherence and consensus to the currently fragmented international disarmament agenda.

The UNSG has given his personal priority to nuclear disarmament and has put forward his 5 point plan, which inter alia, makes reference to a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament matters should be more representative so that it can reflect on the broadest range of views and opinions. Its focus should remain the broader vision of global disarmament issues, rather than as a preparatory committee of one or another treaty.

The current optimism in the field of disarmament should be backed by concrete steps to strengthen the ODA. In particular, we would like the Geneva branch of the ODA to be strengthened to facilitate the implementation of permanent treaty bodies under the UN such as the BWC and the CCW.

In a similar vein, UNIDIR the designated UN Institute to undertake independent, in depth and long term research on disarmament issues deserves greater support from the regular budget of the UN, in terms of facilitating its research work with enhanced staff on a sustainable basis. We would like UNIDIR to retool itself to be in the forefront of research on nuclear disarmament, a task that cannot be accomplished when it is dependent overwhelmingly on voluntary contributions. UNIDIR publications are a valuable resource base and must be disseminated widely.

We believe that UN efforts to promote and encourage disarmament and non-proliferation education based on the recommendations of the 2002 UN study will foster greater awareness and strengthen global collective will in favor of global disarmament objectives.

India has welcomed the opening of the new UN Regional Centre for peace and Disarmament in Asia and Pacific in Kathmandu last year. India will extend all possible support for the Kathmandu Centre to fulfill its mandate and in this regard will make a financial contribution.