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Statement by

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Permanent Representative of India
To the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

At the

General Debate of the First Committee of the
66th Session of the UN General Assembly

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Mr. Chairman, may I begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Chair of the First Committee. I am confident that under your leadership we will accomplish our tasks efficiently and smoothly.

India aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

India has been steadfast in its support for global, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. The Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free and Non-Violent World Order was presented in 1988. As Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said in his address to the 66th UNGA, this Action Plan sets out a concrete roadmap for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable manner.

The goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is need for a meaningful dialogue among all states possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. The progressive de-legitimization of nuclear weapons is essential to the goal of their complete elimination. India's Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament of 2006 contains specific proposals for consideration of the international community.

Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that meets India's national security interests. India is a nuclear weapon state and a responsible member of the world community, and would approach these negotiations as such.

While we share the disappointment among Member States on the continuing impasse in the CD, we believe that this is not due to the CD or its rules of procedure. The CD has the mandate, the membership and the rules of procedure to discharge its responsibilities. We believe that the First Committee should send a strong and clear signal of support for the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and provide political impetus to the multilateral agenda, which includes early commencement of negotiations on FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the agreed mandate. As an essential stakeholder in this process, India is prepared to work with other likeminded countries towards this end.

Mr. Chairman,

India subscribes to a policy of credible minimum nuclear deterrent. We do not subscribe to any arms race, including a nuclear arms race. India has espoused a policy of no first-use and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states and is prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements. We support negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. We also support a Global No-first Use Treaty.

India remains committed to maintaining a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive testing.

There is a strong development rationale for the expansion of nuclear energy, which is indispensable also for energy security and addressing climate change concerns. Expansion of nuclear energy can and must be ensured in a manner that does not enhance proliferation risks and is based on enhanced nuclear safety or security standards evolved under the aegis of the IAEA. India has participated in the Nuclear Security Summit process and activities.

Mr. Chairman,

This is an important year for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, one of the only two treaties banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We view the upcoming 7th Review Conference as a valuable opportunity for States Parties to review and strengthen the Convention and improve its effective implementation, particularly in view of the new challenges facing the international community in the 21st century, including addressing the threat posed by bio-terrorism.

India is an original signatory to the CWC and has faithfully discharged all its obligations. As a responsible state party, we have demonstrated our commitment by destroying all our chemical weapon stockpiles under OPCW verification within the timeframe prescribed by the Convention. It is important to ensure the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention by all States party to the Convention. India believes that it is important to maintain the credibility and integrity of the Convention as a whole.

The Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, including the safety of assets in space, continues to be a priority in light of the expanding uses of outer space and the spread and evolution of space technologies. India supports efforts to strengthen the international legal framework on the security of space assets to enhance space security for all space users and specifically to prevent the weaponization of outer

space. While universal and non-discriminatory TCBMs can be useful complementary measures, they cannot substitute legally binding instruments in this field.

Mr. Chairman,

While we have participated actively in the preparatory meetings with regard to the proposed Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty in 2012, we believe that prospects for a viable and effective Treaty of universal acceptance would be enhanced only if the interests of all the stakeholders are addressed in a consensus based process and outcome, without artificial deadlines.

As a party to the CCW and all its Protocols, India looks forward to a successful 4th Review Conference of the Convention next month. The CCW has proved to be a dynamic instrument in the field of international humanitarian law. India has participated actively in negotiations in the Group of Government Experts on a protocol that seeks to address the humanitarian impact arising from the use of cluster munitions while striking a balance between humanitarian and legitimate security concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

As in previous years, India would be presenting three resolutions for action by the First Committee. These include a draft resolution on a Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and a draft Resolution on Reducing Nuclear Danger. We would also be presenting a draft Resolution on Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Mr. Chairman, the First Committee has a vital responsibility to help the international community forge a renewed consensus on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Our work is also important in building public awareness and support for the international disarmament agenda, especially the cherished goal of a world without nuclear weapons. I assure you of the full cooperation of the Indian delegation in the discharge of your important responsibility.

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