



INDIA
भारत

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

BY

AMBASSADOR SUJATA MEHTA

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA

TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, GENEVA

AT THE

THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE

66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 13, 2011

Statement by India
Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons, First Committee, 66th Session
13 October 2011

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to share briefly India's perspective on issues related to nuclear weapons.

India has been consistent in its support for a world free of nuclear weapons. We have always tempered the exercise of our strategic autonomy with a sense of global responsibility. As Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh stated in the UN General Assembly on September 23, the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan for a Nuclear-Weapons-Free and Nonviolent World Order provides a concrete road map to attain the goal of nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable manner. We remain committed to the objective of that Plan and the realization of its vision of ushering in a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world order.

We believe that nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step by step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework.

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.

While we work towards this goal, measures must be taken to reduce nuclear dangers. Measures to reduce nuclear dangers arising from accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons, de-alerting of nuclear weapons, measures to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear weapons are all pertinent in this regard. In a working paper submitted to the UNGA in 2006, India suggested a number of such measures, including reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment by all nuclear weapon states to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons and specific legal measures such as a Global No First Use Agreement.

Without prejudice to the priority we give 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.

Nuclear energy remains an essential source of clean and sustainable energy for a number of countries, especially developing countries. We must ensure its expansion along with enhanced international standards of nuclear safety and reduced proliferation risks, implemented through effective national action.

India's commitment to global efforts for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery has been unwavering. These efforts are in India's interest as the infirmities of the non-proliferation regime have had an adverse impact on India's security. All states should fully and effectively implement the obligations arising from the agreements or treaties to which they are parties. India's position on the NPT is well-known and needs no reiteration. Nuclear weapons are an integral part of India's national security and will remain so, pending non-discriminatory and global nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman, India's resolutions in the First Committee give expression to India's approach to nuclear issues as well as to our desire to work with fellow member states of the United Nations in pursuit of nuclear disarmament, which was assigned the highest priority by the Final Document of the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament.

Accordingly, we are introducing on behalf of the sponsors a draft resolution on "Reducing Nuclear Danger". The resolution highlights the need for a review of nuclear doctrines and immediate steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons. It advocates an objective which is modest yet crucial for the safety and security of mankind. We are happy that the issues raised by this long-standing resolution are finding greater resonance and recognition in the international community.

Further, we have the honour to present on behalf of the sponsors a draft resolution on a Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons. The text reflects our 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 favourable climate for negotiations on an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.

**