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Statement by

**Ambassador Sujata Mehta,
Permanent Representative of India
to
Conference on Disarmament, Geneva**

At

**Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons,
First Committee, 67th Session**

New York

19 October 2012

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament has been a priority for the United Nations since the very first UNGA resolution of 24 January 1946 and India has been consistent in its support for the achievement of this priority objective. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was among the first world leaders to champion the cause of nuclear disarmament in the 1950s when the nuclear arms race was rearing its head. Addressing the Third Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament in 1988, our late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi proposed an Action Plan for a Nuclear-Weapons- Free and Nonviolent World Order 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.

As a nuclear weapon state, India is cognizant of its responsibility and our support for global, non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament has not diminished. As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated in the Indian parliament in 2007 "The possession of nuclear weapons only increases our sense of global responsibility and does not diminish it." 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. Steps for the progressive de-legitimization of nuclear weapons are essential to the goal of their complete elimination.

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. India's Working Paper retains the spirit and substance of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan and aims to stimulate debate and discussion on what could be done today to implement the abiding vision of that Plan. With this objective in view, a National Conference was held on August 21 this year in New Delhi with the participation of more than a thousand students and researchers to raise awareness and promote research on global nuclear disarmament.

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. We remain committed to maintaining a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive testing.

Mr. Chairman, India is committed to working with the international community to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, including through strong national export controls and membership of the multilateral export control regimes. 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 energy remains an essential source of clean and sustainable energy especially for developing countries. Its expansion must be accompanied by enhanced international standards for nuclear safety, nuclear security and reduced proliferation risk. These international standards should be implemented through effective national action. The International Atomic Energy Agency has an irreplaceable role in this respect. India has contributed actively to the Nuclear Security Summit process launched by President Obama in 2010 and we participated in the recent High Level Meeting on countering nuclear terrorism. Our resolution on WMD terrorism in the General Assembly has received consensus support since it was tabled in 2002. We are tabling it on behalf of the sponsors at this session as well.

Mr. Chairman, India's resolutions in the First Committee give expression to our desire to work with other member states of the United Nations to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament. 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. Since 1998, the resolution has advocated modest yet critical objectives for the safety and security of mankind. It is a matter of satisfaction that the issues raised by this long-standing resolution are finding greater resonance and recognition in the international community, including through another resolution on the subject.

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. This traditional 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.

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