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**INDIA**  
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**Statement by**

**Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill**  
**Permanent Representative of India to the**  
**Conference on Disarmament**

**At**  
**The General Debate of the First Committee**

**72<sup>nd</sup> Session**

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Mr. Chairman,

The Indian delegation congratulates you and the Bureau and assures you of our full support and cooperation. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the NAM.

Every year brings new developments, risks and opportunities and the First Committee is a good opportunity to reflect on the last twelve months. The nuclear and missile tests conducted by DPRK have aggravated existing complexities on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and triggered universal condemnation and concern. Narrow views of national security interest and misguided notions of parity continued to obstruct the adoption of a programme of work at the Conference on Disarmament despite promising discussions in the Way Ahead Working Group. It is the frustration with eight years of inability to negotiate at the CD in violation of the consensus adoption of a programme of work in May 2009 that has led to experimentation with forums outside of the agreed disarmament machinery, and the system created by the Final Document of SSOD-I, has paid the price for this obstructionism.

The longstanding view that actual elimination and international verification must accompany disarmament instruments, particularly in the field of weapons of mass destruction, and that the possessors must perforce be part of the disarmament scheme has been put under new strain. The rift between those who believe that nuclear weapons can be made to vanish by fiat and those who believe that nuclear weapons must be asserted even more vigorously today has grown wider. Technology poses fresh challenges as it gets reflected in new weapon systems and the modernisation of existing systems with strategic effects. Time is running out for preventing, without exception, the weaponisation of outer space.

We need to bridge the growing divide on disarmament through dialogue and a renewed commitment to multilateralism. The disarmament machinery too needs to live up to the expectations of its founding fathers. That will require commitment and effort beyond the talking points and a genuine attempt to raise the quality of substantive work in each and every forum.

India remains committed to the goal of a nuclear weapons free world and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons consistent with the highest priority accorded to nuclear disarmament by the Final Document of SSOD-I. India believes that this goal 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. We support UNGA resolution 71/71 and the working paper CD/2067 submitted last year by member states belonging to the G21 seeking the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention.

India did not participate in the conference leading to the adoption of an instrument on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the treaty does not create any obligations for India, which would continue to be bound solely by the treaties to which it has given its sovereign consent. However, we remain willing to work with its signatories in disarmament forums to reduce the role and military utility of nuclear weapons, prohibit their use under any circumstances and to eliminate them globally under international verification.

Further, without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we are ready to support the commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the CD on the basis of the mandate contained in CD/1299. India welcomes the adoption by consensus of the Report of the GGE on FMCT established pursuant to UNGA resolution 67/53 which underlined that the Treaty and its negotiation in the CD remains a priority enjoying international support and CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein remains the most suitable basis for negotiations to commence. India actively participated in the High-level Expert Preparatory Group (HLEPG) meeting on the FMCT this year and looks forward to continuing discussions next year.

The CWC and BWC are worthy examples of global non-discriminatory treaties for the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction. India has completed its obligations on stockpile destruction under the CWC and has contributed to efforts under the UN and the OPCW for the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpiles. The OPCW deserves our full support for addressing any gaps in the relevant declarations and in investigating the recent use of chemical weapons. We call upon all the relevant parties to cooperate fully in this task. We welcome the completion of the destruction of the CW stockpile held by the Russian Federation under OPCW verification.

We share the widespread interest among BWC States Parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention. Rapidly evolving technology and new proliferation trends, including the threat of use of biological agents or toxins for terrorist purposes, underline the urgency of this task. India participated actively in the Eighth Review Conference of the BWC in November 2016 and submitted concrete proposals on key aspects of the Convention. We were disappointed that the Conference could not achieve a result commensurate with the challenge. Nevertheless, it is heartening that there is a clear desire to move ahead and, in my capacity as Chair of the 2017 MSP, I look forward to the constructive engagement of all States Parties during our annual

meeting in December so that we can deliver successfully on the mandate given to the meeting by the Eighth Review Conference.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons or the CCW is an important and valuable instrument. India welcomes the outcome of the Fifth Review Conference held in 2016, including the decision to establish an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) related to emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. In my capacity as Chair of the GGE, I am pleased with the consultations that are preceding it and I look forward to a stimulating discussion next month in Geneva, which should lay the ground for further progress. A continued substantive mandate, adequate financial resources and the participation of all stakeholders are essential in this regard.

Broadly speaking, the accelerating pace of technological change necessitates a comprehensive system-wide assessment of the potential impact of science and technology developments on the United Nations system's activities in the area of international security and disarmament. In addition to its traditional resolutions, India would therefore be presenting a resolution on the 'Role of Science and Technology in the context of International Security and Disarmament'.

Mr. Chairman,

I began with a somber picture and now allow me to conclude with some optimistic remarks. The adoption by consensus in the UNDC this year after a hiatus of 17 years of recommendations on "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", the adoption by consensus of the objectives and agenda of SSOD-IV, as well as the substantive work undertaken in the Conference on Disarmament under the Way Ahead Working Group – clearly underline that political will and a strong commitment to multilateralism can revitalize the working of the disarmament machinery and help us deliver on the international community's expectations on international security and disarmament. We stand ready to work under your leadership for a successful session of the First Committee so that we can continue this trend of optimism.

Thank you.

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