



INDIA भारत

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Statement

by

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at

The General Debate of the First Committee

73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York

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Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of India congratulates you on your assumption as the Chair of the 73rd session of the First Committee and assures you of our full support and cooperation. We associate ourselves with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM.

2018 has been a momentous year. The international security situation is in a flux. This also has implications for India's national security, which cannot be viewed merely in the regional context. India has always supported efforts to bring about peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and diplomacy. In this context, we welcome the US-DPRK Summit and the three Summits between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK.

India has maintained that the Iranian nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully through dialogue and diplomacy by respecting Iran's right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy as also the international community's strong interest in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. We encourage all parties to the JCPOA to remain engaged to resolve the relevant issues.

Mr. Chairman,

While the Subsidiary Bodies held substantive discussions this year, it is disappointing that the CD could not adopt a programme of work. Owing to narrow perceptions of national security interests and quest for parity, the CD has been prevented from adopting its programme of work. While reiterating our commitment to preserve the disarmament machinery and system created by the SSOD-I, we are concerned over the tendency to resort to forums outside the existing disarmament machinery.

In this respect, we reiterate that the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, negotiated outside the CD, does not create any obligations for India, which is bound solely by the treaties to which it has given its sovereign consent. India believes that this Treaty, in no way constitutes or contributes to the development of any customary international law. However, India stands ready to work with its signatories to achieve our shared goal of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that the divide among the international community on different pathways to a nuclear weapons free world needs to be bridged through dialogue, cooperation and commitment to multilateralism. There is a need for meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to

build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. Towards this end, India will be retableing its resolutions on the 'Convention on the Prohibition on Use of Nuclear Weapons' and 'Reducing Nuclear Danger'.

India remains committed to the goal of a nuclear weapons free world and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It 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, as outlined in our Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament submitted to the UNGA in 2006. India is also participating in the GGE on Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

Moreover, without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we are ready to support the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the CD on the basis of the mandate contained in CD/1299. The Report of the GGE on FMCT has underlined that the Treaty and its negotiation in the CD remains a priority and CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein remains the most suitable basis for negotiations to commence. India welcomes the work done in the High-level Expert Preparatory Group (HLEPG) on FMCT in accordance with its mandate. We hope that this would propel the CD to commence negotiations on an FMCT at the earliest.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches great importance to the CWC which embodies the global norm against the use of chemical weapons. We share the concern over allegations on the use of chemical weapons coming from different parts of the world. It has been India's consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, under any circumstances, cannot be justified and the perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable. At a time when the Convention is facing serious challenges, India is committed to maintaining its credibility and integrity.

We are happy that the Meeting of the States Parties to the BWC in 2017 was successful owing to the constructive engagement by all States Parties, which led to the adoption, by consensus, of an inter-sessional programme for 2018-20. We share the widespread interest among BWC States Parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention. We welcome the substantive discussions in the Meetings of Experts held earlier this year.

Mr. Chairman,

The CCW has served as an important and useful instrument. India had the privilege to chair the GGE on LAWS, for two years – which has successfully

adopted reports by consensus, including the Possible Guiding Principles. As another contribution to the CCW, India, in collaboration with the ICRC, hosted an International Conference on the CCW in December 2017 bringing together more than 80 participants from 24 States. In view of our abiding interest in the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we are actively participating in the work of the GGE on PAROS and look forward to its substantive outcome.

The accelerating pace of technological changes necessitates a comprehensive system-wide assessment of the potential impact of developments in science and technology in the area of international security and disarmament. With this objective in mind, India had presented a resolution in 2017, an initiative that we intend to take forward this year. We thank the UN Secretary General and welcome his report on current developments in Science and Technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts as contained in A/73/177. We also thank the member States for submitting their views on this important subject.

We would like to reiterate our commitment to non-proliferation in all its aspects. Accordingly, India has joined various multilateral export control regimes. With a view to address global concerns on the proliferation of WMD to terrorists, India will be tabling once again the consensus resolution on 'Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring WMD'. With a view to promote effective implementation of UNSCR 1540, India, in cooperation with Germany and the UNODA, hosted the India-Wiesbaden Conference 2018 in April this year.

Mr. Chairman, India is fully committed to upholding multilateralism and the institutions it engenders. To this end, we have instituted an Annual Disarmament and International Security Fellowship Programme for young diplomats commencing from January, 2019 and hope that it shall make a valuable contribution, to our common purpose.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
