



**INDIA**  
**भारत**

**Statement**

**by**

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**to the Conference on Disarmament**

**at**

**United Nations Disarmament Commission**

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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of my delegation, allow me to congratulate you on your election to chair this Substantive Session of the UNDC in 2003. The experience and expertise that you bring to this forum would indeed be valuable for our deliberations. I assure you, and the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups the constructive cooperation of my delegation in seeking a fruitful outcome during this Session.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs, for the initiatives and energy that he brought to multilateral disarmament work over the past five years.

It is rather unfortunate that for reasons of logistics the UNDC was unable to hold a session during 2002 to conclude the three-year cycle of work commenced in 2000. We are thus meeting now, at a time when the international security environment is under greater strain due to recent developments. The ongoing war in Iraq has called into question many assumptions that the international community used to take for granted, challenging the very Charter and the will of the United Nations. In these troubled times, some would express doubts about what the UNDC can really achieve or contribute in terms of pursuing peace and undiminished security for all. To my delegation there is no doubt that UNDC has to demonstrate, particularly at this time, the pressing need for the world to act collectively and multilaterally, through a truly representative and universal forum to address issues of peace and security that concern us all. We need to look beyond the "coalitions of the willing" to address the problems that confront us, and re-establish the sanctity and credibility of norms that we can all collectively agree upon.

The subjects that we are dealing with: "Ways and Means to Achieve Nuclear Disarmament" and "Practical CBMs in the Field of Conventional Arms" take on a greater sense of urgency and relevance in the current situation. It is important therefore, that we are able to conclude our work at this session with a spirit of mutual accommodation and cooperation.

### **Ways and Means to Achieve Nuclear Disarmament**

During the past sessions we have reiterated India's resolve to remain committed to global nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified frame work of time.

The end of the Cold War had provided the opportunity to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons but we saw instead that most of the world acquiesced in the maneuvers to perpetuate for ever the right of a handful of nations to retain their arsenals. The so called "unequivocal undertakings" offered since then have proved to be part of an elaborate exercise in equivocation. The search for unilateral advantage has led to measures that undermine the principle of irreversibility of committed reductions. There is no move towards collective renouncing of "first - use". Instead there are prospects of advocacy of preemptive use and a move towards developing new types of arsenals justified by new rationales. One also discerns a tendency to go back on commitments given regarding negative security assurances. The discriminatory non-proliferation regime is displaying cracks caused by its inherent flaws and seems destined to be confronted with threats to its very existence. All these developments, combined with the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament do not bode well for the prospects of early nuclear disarmament. The UNDC cannot afford to allow the drift to continue and needs to lay down a road map that indicates clearly the direction that all of us should take to remain true to the objective of eventual nuclear disarmament.

At the 2001 Session, India presented a Working Paper contained in document A/CN.10/2001/WG.1/WP.3 which listed specific measures that will help us achieve our objective. We are glad to note that some of the elements contained in our Working Paper have been reflected in the revised paper presented by the Working Group Chairman for our consideration this year. While commending this effort, let me reiterate that UNDC should frame its recommendations and report in such a manner that the measures contained therein will be applicable universally and not merely to States parties to specific treaties or particular groups of some like minded countries. My delegation will be making appropriate suggestions in the coming days to ensure that a report of this forum truly reflects the universal character of the UNDC.

### **Practical CBMs in the Field of Conventional Arms**

Mr. Chairman,

As an initiator of CBMs in our own neighbourhood, India recognizes the usefulness of such measures in the field of conventional weapons for maintaining international peace and security. We also

believe that it will be convenient to have a set of guidelines (which already exist) and examples in an easily available form, which can be drawn upon by interested parties, who do so voluntarily while adapting it to their particular set of circumstances, as appropriate.

There also exist significant multilateral arrangements in the field of conventional arms and promoting adherence to these is a CBM. India plays an active role in the CCW process, having ratified all its Protocols including the Amended Protocol II. We are also engaged in implementing the Programme of Action agreed upon at the International Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and look forward to the first biennial conference to be held in New York in July this year. Ratification of the CCW Protocols by more countries and effective implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons would improve trust and confidence.

While considering a list of possible 'measures', it is important not to lose sight of the fact that building confidence between countries is a process in which considerable time and effort has to be invested. The transparency and predictability inherent in specific measures need to be sustained over a considerable period in a manner that generates confidence in the sincerity of intentions of concerned parties. The effectiveness of unilateral, bilateral, regional or multilateral measures can eventually be measured only in terms of the sincerity of intentions that they collectively convey.

The revised paper presented by the Working Group Chairperson provides a sound basis for useful work to be concluded at this Session.

Mr. Chairman,

At a time when the very concept of multilateralism in the context of disarmament is under threat, UNDC will naturally be buffeted by pulls and pressures from different sides. However, this institution cannot afford to succumb to such attempts. Our efforts should be to conclude the work we have undertaken for the current three year-cycle, thus making an important contribution to international peace and security. You will not find my delegation lacking in the spirit of cooperation and accommodation required for completing our task.