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STATEMENT

BY

**AMBASSADOR JAYANT PRASAD
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, GENEVA
HEAD OF DELEGATION**

at the

**Substantive Session of
United Nations Disarmament Commission
(New York, 9-27 April 2007)**

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10 April 2007

Mr. Chairman,

Please accept my delegation's warm felicitations on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. You have our full cooperation. We are confident that under your guidance members of the Commission will carry forward their constructive engagement on both the agenda issues, so that the Commission will be in a position to finalize its recommendations on them at our next meeting in 2008. We would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Jean-François Régis Zinzou of Benin and Mr. Carlos Duarte of Brazil, Chairpersons of Working Groups-I and II, respectively, and to compliment them on the work that they have accomplished at the 2006 session of the Commission.

India has consistently contributed to the work of the Commission. As a deliberative body, the Commission evaluates and assesses the prevailing situation, outlines the objectives of the specific issues it is mandated to discuss, taking into account the concerns and priorities of all its members and, based on these, considers and agrees upon principles, guidelines or recommendations. Mindful of this mandate, my delegation will be ready to work with others to enable the Commission to reach its conclusions by consensus on both the agenda issues.

The tenor and content of the discussions held last year on the mandate of Working Group-I, to make recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, had focused on our common and ultimate goal, to seek the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The statement read out on behalf of NAM member States by the delegation of Indonesia yesterday reflects this, as also the resolve of UN Member States, contained in the Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to the disarmament and the Millennium Declaration, that nuclear disarmament is the most important issue on the global disarmament agenda.

India remains fully committed to the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world, to be realized through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. During the course of the discussions last year, we had spelt out India's specific proposals to build a consensus that could strengthen the ability of the international community to move towards the goal of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, which we view as two ends of a single continuum. In order to facilitate consideration of practical steps and recommendations for this purpose, we have separately requested the Commission's Secretariat to circulate the text of India's Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament, presented at the 61st session of

the First Committee of the General Assembly on 6th October 2006, as a Working Paper of Working Group-I. We shall spell out India's perspectives on the ways and means to achieve the twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the deliberations of the Working Group devoted to this issue.

In Working Group II, in considering practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, we not only have the results of the discussions last year, but also the inheritance of exchanges on the issue between 2001 and 2003. In our deliberations we should be mindful of the need to reach consensus after four years of discussions on this issue already. We should, therefore, make every effort to build on the large measure of convergence achieved already.

India fully supports the adoption of bilateral, regional and global confidence-building measures, freely arrived at by the participating States. The core objectives of confidence-building measures are risk reduction, prevention of accidental war, prevention of crises and management of dialogue in times of crises, mitigating misunderstanding and misinterpretation of military activities, thereby promoting a stable environment of peace and security between and among States. India has initiated and concluded a number of unilateral and bilateral confidence-building measures in Asia to build trust and confidence and ensure greater transparency. We are continuing to seek further measures to prevent misunderstandings and promote a stable environment of peace and security with the countries of our neighbourhood. In congruence with our practice, we hope to contribute further to the deliberations of Working Group II.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban-ki Moon, in his thoughtful address yesterday, had spoken of his personal vocation, from his very first day in office, in revitalizing the international disarmament agenda as well as UN's effectiveness in this area. He said he was looking to this Commission for ideas and leadership. Speaking for my delegation, Mr. Chairman, India is ready to respond to the Secretary-General's call to help reinvigorate the disarmament agenda. We look forward to working purposively with other delegations to achieve this.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
