

Statement by Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill  
Permanent Representative of India  
to the Conference on Disarmament  
at the CD Plenary on March 28, 2017

Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the Presidency of the Conference. It is a pleasure to see Senegal, a fellow member of the Group of 21, in the Chair. Allow me also to acknowledge with appreciation the efforts of the Romanian and Russian Presidencies to steer the CD in the direction of substantive work. We also appreciate the continuing efforts of the Chair of the Working Group on the Way Ahead, the distinguished Ambassador of Myanmar.

India remains committed to the ideals enshrined in the UN Charter and to multilateralism. This is truly the age of interdependence. Enduring solutions to our common problems of peace and security can only be found through the pursuit of genuine multilateralism. The world is no longer the playground of a few; it is and will be truly multipolar, globally and in all regions of the world. Global forums of governance too would have to evolve and reflect this plurality; otherwise their effectiveness and legitimacy would suffer. The language of privilege and entitlement has no place in today's world and indeed human progress will wash around the remaining

pockets of privilege and entitlement, leaving them stranded just as it has done so in the past. Those who wish to take on the mantle of leading must demonstrate that they truly and selflessly seek the common good, follow what they preach and respect for others what they ask for themselves.

The CD, Mr. President, brings us together in sovereign equality and in full responsibility to craft legally-binding instruments for the promotion of international peace and security. Our agenda is comprehensive. Equally, it is flexible to accommodate contemporary challenges such as those related to BMD & anti-satellite weapons mentioned by previous speakers. Even a casual look at the international security scenario reveals a host of such challenges. Terrorism continues to flourish and terrorist violence encouraged or condoned. Narratives of victimhood and otherness perpetuate such violence. Deadly weapons and technologies continue to be trafficked causing death and mayhem on all continents. The norm against the use of chemical weapons, so assiduously cultivated over nearly a century, has been flouted in recent years. Biological weapons and toxins, a scourge we seemed to have left behind in the 20<sup>th</sup> century could make a comeback with new technologies. The threat of non-state actors accessing weapons of mass destruction is real and present. Information and Communication Technologies, admirable in their developmental impact, are now being forged into weapons of disruption and conflict. The advent of autonomy in weapon systems poses new challenges for state control and responsibility. There are new threats to security and order in the maritime domain.

While these so-called non-traditional security concerns grow, traditional threats have not disappeared. In fact, nuclear proliferation continues and new scenarios are being conjured for the use of nuclear weapons in a chilling throwback to the worst clichés of the Cold War. Fissile material production for nuclear weapons is being expanded at a rate not seen since the Cold War. A false narrative of double standards and discrimination is used to cloak these designs, which predate any *post-hoc* causality heard in this chamber. Meanwhile, the goal posts on the only instrument capable of bringing such production to an end in a non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable manner are sought to be constantly moved and linkages attempted with issues that have nothing to do with this forum.

Mr. President, I wish to be clear. The real danger to international security comes from extremely narrow views of security, lowering of the threshold for use of nuclear weapons at a time when an impressive number of States want to move in the other direction and from State patronage of non-state actors whose nihilism knows no international boundary or humanitarian taboo. We live in a world full of asymmetries. Imagine if all States with asymmetry concerns started to address these concerns with such dangerous tools. Strategic trust would be impossible to sustain in such a situation and progress on disarmament and international security would grind to a halt.

Mr. President, these challenges would look less stark if the world was moving as a whole towards the complete and verifiable

elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. India supports the call made by the distinguished representative of Nigeria on behalf of the G21 in this chamber earlier this month “As the highest priority, the CD should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time.”

CD is the right place for pursuing nuclear disarmament in all its essential elements. It has the mandate, the membership and the rules for embarking on the path to nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, India is not participating in the work of the conference on the prohibition of nuclear weapons that has started this week in New York. This decision has not been easy for India. We appreciate the sincere effort behind the initiative and remain willing to work with the sponsors to reduce the role and military utility of nuclear weapons, to prohibit their use under any circumstances and to eliminate them globally. Mr. President, nuclear disarmament requires a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework; it will have to rest on three pillars: a universal prohibition, complete elimination and international verification. India is ready to begin work on these essential elements through the establishment of a subsidiary body of the CD with an agreed mandate as part of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Before concluding, may I request that slides of today's presentations be shared so that our experts can study them seriously. These presentations underline the need to identify all factors, which negatively impact on strategic trust and confidence, and conversely those which can improve strategic trust and mutual confidence. In this regard, India has called for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines.

I thank you, Mr. President.