

Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons

14 October 2016

INDIA STATEMENT

Ambassador D.B. Venkatesh Varma
Permanent Representative of India to the
Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, at the
First Committee of the
71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Mr. Chairman,

India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Nonaligned Movement.

2. India's commitment to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament with a specified timeframe has been firm and consistent as seen in its Working Paper submitted as CD/1816. Pursuant to UNGA resolution 68/32, India has supported the NAM proposal for a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention to be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament. India joined the G21 Working Paper CD 2067 submitted in the CD this year. Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of an FMCT that meets India's national security interests. The report of the GGE on FMCT confirmed that CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein remains the most suitable basis on which negotiations should commence. We are not in favour of *forum - shopping* for negotiation of this Treaty.

3. As a responsible nuclear power India has a policy of credible minimum deterrence based on a No First Use posture and non-use of nuclear weapons against non- nuclear weapon states. We remain committed to maintaining a unilateral voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive testing.

4. India's position on the NPT is well-known and needs no reiteration. There is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. At the same time, we support strengthening global non-proliferation objectives, in particular the full and effective implementation by States of their obligations arising from the relevant agreements and treaties including the NPT. India is committed to making its contribution to strengthening non-

proliferation including through participation in the multilateral export control regimes. This year India joined the MTCR and has subscribed to the HCOC.

5. The international community has a vital interest in preventing terrorists from gaining access to nuclear weapons and other sensitive materials and technologies and in isolating States which harbor and provide support to terrorists based on their soil. The international community should take a united stand against those who indulge in nuclear threats or benefit from clandestine proliferation linkages.

6. Recent meetings on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, generated considerable interest in addressing the most serious threat to the survival of mankind posed by the use of nuclear weapons. India participated in some of these meetings in the hope that these would help generate momentum for increased restraints on use of such weapons. It remains our consistent position that the process should be inclusive and do no harm to the disarmament machinery. In terms of substance it should promote genuine progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. We look forward to constructive discussions at the First Committee on nuclear disarmament including with the sponsors of these initiatives, with many of whom we have worked closely in the past within NAM & outside.

Mr. Chairman,

7. India would like to present on behalf of the sponsors a draft resolution on a Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons, issued this year as document L.10. First introduced in 1982 this is one of the long standing resolutions in the First Committee and reflects our belief that a legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons will contribute to the process of the step-by-step de-legitimization of nuclear weapons and create a favourable climate for negotiations on nuclear disarmament. As such it is firmly anchored in the humanitarian tradition of nuclear disarmament and has for many years enjoyed the support of a vast majority of member states. We urge those states which continue to vote against this resolution to reconsider their position to bring it in line with their professed support for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

8. The draft resolution on "Reducing Nuclear Danger", issued as L.11, highlights the need for a review of nuclear doctrines and the need for steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons. We welcome the greater resonance in the international community on the objectives of this resolution of avoiding unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons.

9. The draft resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", issued as L.12, which has enjoyed strong support and a large number of co-sponsors reflects the continuing concerns of the international community with respect to the risks posed by terrorists gaining access to WMDs and sensitive materials and technologies. The

resolution enumerates a number of measures at the national and international level to address this threat. We hope that the First Committee will adopt this resolution by consensus.

Thank you.