



INDIA
भारत

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT BY

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**PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT,
GENEVA**

GENERAL DEBATE

UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

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Thank you Madam Chair,

I take this opportunity to warmly congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the 2018 Session of the UNDC as we embark on a new triennial cycle. The Indian delegation is very pleased to see you chair this session and we assure you of our full support. We appreciate your stewardship of this session, including through the informal consultations held by you in the run-up to the session, which led to the early adoption of the agenda. I would also like to congratulate other members of the Bureau, as well as the Chairs of the two Working Groups.

India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of NAM yesterday.

India attaches much importance to the UNDC as the specialized deliberative leg of the disarmament machinery put in place by the first Special Session on Disarmament. The Commission plays a unique role as the only forum with universal membership for in-depth deliberations on relevant disarmament issues. At a time of growing mistrust and rising international tensions as well as numerous challenges to both the disarmament agenda and the disarmament machinery, the role of the UNDC as a platform for dialogue and cooperation assumes even greater significance.

We were extremely pleased Madam Chair, when after a hiatus of 18 years, the Working Group II of the UNDC was successful in adopting, by consensus, recommendations on 'Practical confidence building measures in the field of conventional weapons' last year. With this notable achievement, the UNDC has clearly demonstrated that it has the ability to build upon its past successes of having adopted useful guidelines and recommendations, 17 in all so far, and make a valuable contribution to the disarmament discourse in discharge of its mandate. The successful outcome has also disabused some of the notion that our failure in addressing substantive disarmament and international security issues is due to some procedural flaw or an inherent inefficiency in the disarmament machinery. Rather, it is more because of political will, or the lack of it, of member States to invest in multilateral outcomes that would be of enduring value to the entire international community.

At the same time, Madam Chair, we were disappointed at not being able to repeat this success in Working Group I on Nuclear Disarmament last year. We hope that convergences can be made in the vastly divergent positions in this new triennial cycle. The rift between those who believe that nuclear weapons can be made to vanish by fiat and those who believe that nuclear weapons must be asserted even more vigorously today has only grown wider. We need to bridge this divide through dialogue and a renewed commitment to multilateralism.

India, for its part, remains committed to global, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. As such, India has supported the proposal put forward by NAM for the CD to commence negotiations on a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention. Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, India has also supported the commencement of negotiations of an FMCT in the CD on the basis of the agreed mandate. We have called for a meaningful dialogue amongst all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. India's resolutions in the First Committee on the Convention on the Prohibition of Use of Nuclear Weapons and on Reducing Nuclear Danger reflect this approach.

Madam Chair,

We begin deliberations on a new agenda item this year, the first in the last 18 years, on outer space, which has been a long-standing agenda item of the CD, going as far back as 1982. This core issue will now be a topic for substantive discussions under the recently established Subsidiary Body 3 in the CD. The GGE on outer space, which will meet in Geneva in August later this year, has been mandated to make recommendations on the substantive elements of an international legally-binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The UN COPUOS Working Group in Vienna continues its work on the adoption of guidelines on long-term sustainability of outer space, having recently arrived at consensus on the preamble as well as nine additional guidelines.

It is therefore important, Madam Chair, that as the UNDC begins work on this new agenda item, we do not duplicate work that is already being done in other fora. It is equally important to address the broad spectrum of space security in a comprehensive and coherent manner. While TCBMs are important in themselves, we believe that they cannot be a substitute for concluding substantive legal measures to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which should continue to be a priority for the international community. It is important that member States be given the incentive to protect their interests by investing in legally-binding multilateral instruments rather than by resorting to national measures or interim partial steps that do not fully address the concerns of all space actors.

India believes that outer space should be an ever expanding frontier of cooperative endeavour rather than an area of conflict. As a space-faring nation with wide ranging interests in outer space activities, we remain opposed to the weaponisation of outer space and support collective efforts to strengthen the safety and security of space-based assets.

In conclusion Madam Chair, we begin our work this year on an optimistic note building upon the successes of the UNDC last year, the adoption of the objectives and agenda of SSOD-IV as well as the adoption of a decision in the CD earlier this year leading to the establishment of 5 subsidiary bodies. It is important for the triad of the disarmament machinery to function as a composite whole, so that ideas can flow and progress made in one institution be leveraged in the other. In pursuit of our collective security in an increasingly interdependent world, we have no alternative other than to strengthen the idea of multilateralism and the institutions it engenders. With this spirit, India looks forward to engaging constructively in our discussions.

I thank you, Madam Chair.
