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Statement

by

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**Permanent Mission of India
to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva**

**At the 2012
Substantive Session of the United Nations
Disarmament Commission**

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Mr Chairman,

The Indian delegation joins other colleagues in congratulating you on the assumption of the Chairmanship of the UNDC. We also congratulate other members of the bureau on their election. You can be assured of the full support of the Indian delegation in discharging your responsibilities towards a constructive session of the Commission this year. Our delegation would also like to thank the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her interest in the work of the Commission.

India associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches high importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized deliberative leg of the triad of UN disarmament machinery put in place by the First Special Session on Disarmament. With its universal membership, the Commission provides a unique platform to the international community to discuss pertinent aspects, reach common positions, bridge any differences and adopt concrete recommendations of universal applicability on disarmament issues.

We share the disappointment that the Commission has not been able to achieve consensus on its agenda items for more than a decade now. However, we should bear in mind that the Commission has had several successes in the past when it was able to adopt principles, guidelines and recommendations on specific disarmament issues. We believe that given sufficient political will the UNDC can play an important role in taking forward multilateral disarmament agenda. In the last cycle of meetings there was some progress on the items on the Commission's agenda even though consensus again eluded us. As we embark on a new three-year cycle of UNDC meetings we call upon all delegations to give a positive impulse to global non-discriminatory disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

India believes that in the new cycle of work of the UNDC, nuclear disarmament should remain the key agenda item. India attaches the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. India remains committed to the objective of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988 and the realisation of its vision of a nuclear weapons free world and non-violent world order. As our Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh said in his address to the 66th UN General Assembly, the Action Plan sets out a concrete roadmap for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable manner.

The goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral

framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is need for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapon in international affairs and security doctrines. Measures to reduce nuclear danger arising from accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons, increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons and de-alerting of nuclear weapons are essential steps. The progressive de-legitimisation of nuclear weapons is essential to the goal of their complete elimination.

India is committed to working with the international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The danger of nuclear weapons and related material falling in the hands of terrorists has made the threat more complex and dangerous. While Member States discharge their primary responsibility to strengthen national measures related to nuclear security, it is also important to strengthen international cooperative efforts to address this critical challenge. The IAEA plays a central role in this regard. India has been an active participant in the Nuclear Security Summit process.

India subscribes to a policy of a credible minimum deterrent. We do not subscribe to any arms race including a nuclear arms race. India has espoused a policy of no first use and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states and is prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements. India has also supported universalization of the policy of no-first use in a global no-first use treaty. We support negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapons States against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

India remains committed to maintaining a unilateral, voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive testing. We are also committed to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty to ban the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The future treaty would have to meet India's national security interests. In accordance with the mandate contained in CD/1299, we believe that CD is the appropriate forum for negotiating the FMCT.

I would like to recall India's recent contributions to the debate on nuclear disarmament in the UN framework. In 2007 we presented a Working Paper on nuclear disarmament to the UNDC containing specific proposals for consideration of the international community. Our resolutions in the UNGA First Committee titled "Convention on the prohibition of use of nuclear weapons" and "Reducing nuclear danger" are adopted with substantial support. India supports efforts for raising public awareness to generate the necessary momentum for realising the goal of a nuclear weapons free world.

Mr. Chairman,

Based on the recommendations of the relevant UNGA resolutions, the last cycle of the UNDC included "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s

as the Fourth disarmament decade” as one of its agenda item. Regrettably, we were not able to achieve consensus on this agenda item despite the best efforts of the working groups. We are now in 2012, already well into the decade of 2010s, and this agenda item may look dated. However, we believe that there is still room for the UNDC to deliberate this item in the meetings of the current cycle to see if there is greater convergence of views and the possibility of achieving consensus. The draft Declaration could provide the requisite impulse on disarmament issues in this decade and could set an aspirational disarmament agenda for the international community keeping in mind the current global realities.

Mr. Chairman,

In the last two cycles of UNDC meetings as well as between 2001-03 consensus eluded us on the agenda item related to conventional weapons, although the discussions were useful and a large measure of common ground was achieved. We are ready to once more engage in deliberations on “Practical CBMs in the field of conventional weapons”. India supports practical CBM initiatives at unilateral, bilateral, regional and global levels. Such measures can promote a stable environment of peace and security amongst states by building confidence and enhancing transparency. We believe that a step-by-step approach should be adopted, respectful of the sovereign right of States to choose CBMs best suited to their interests.

Mr. Chairman,

Some delegations have expressed their desire to discuss working methods of UNDC in this year’s meetings. We believe that this issue needs to be approached in light of the discussions which have taken place in the UNDC in the past - in 1998, when the decision 52/492 was adopted and in 2006, when UNGA adopted Resolution 61/98 which included additional measures for improving the effectiveness of UNDC’s methods of work. It is up to us Member States to put the decisions we have taken into practice. Discussions related to disarmament machinery have also taken place in the UNGA under the item “Revitalizing the work of CD and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations”.

We believe that the current impasse in the multilateral disarmament machinery is not due to procedural reasons or indeed due to deficiencies in the machinery itself. Proposals that question the viability or relevance of the disarmament machinery and suggest unrealistic alternatives will not lead to productive results in taking forward the agreed multilateral agenda.

My delegation seeks to actively participate in the deliberations in the days ahead with the hope that we will be able to achieve significant results in this cycle of UNDC meetings.

Thank you.

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