

**Statement by Ambassador (Dr.) Pankaj Sharma,  
Permanent Representative of India to the  
Conference on Disarmament during the High-Level Segment of the  
Conference on Disarmament on February 24, 2020**

**Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished colleagues**

India congratulates you on chairing this High Level Segment which falls during your Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assures you of the full support and cooperation of our delegation. India and Argentina enjoy close bilateral relations. It is therefore an added pleasure to see you in the Chair. We have been privileged to listen to a number of high dignitaries today.

2. The Conference on Disarmament has so far not been able to adopt a Programme of Work, in spite of the extensive efforts undertaken by the P6+2. We hope that with your able leadership and guidance, the Conference would be able to soon adopt a decision to advance its substantive work.

3. Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, in his remarks at the Munich Security Conference earlier this month, had emphasized that multilateralism can be strengthened by creative diplomacy and plurilateral understanding and that multilateralism should be recognized, preserved and protected. India's approach to the Conference on Disarmament is predicated precisely on this vision.

4. The First Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament had noted that "the attainment of the objective of security, which is an inseparable element of peace, has always been one of the most profound aspirations of humanity." In this context, it had emphasized that disarmament has thus become an imperative and the most urgent task facing the international community. This aspiration and the urgency of disarmament are as relevant today as they were more than four decades ago at the time of the founding of the Disarmament triad in the form of the CD, the UNDC and the First Committee. We hope that the UNDC would be able to resume its formal session this year and fulfil its mandate.

5. India attaches high importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, as mandated by the final document of SSOD-I and reaffirmed most recently in UNGA Resolution 74/74.

6. The Conference since the time of the Decalogue annually adopts an important agenda that deals with some of the most critical challenges facing the international community related to disarmament and international security. In this framework, India has been advocating a comprehensive and balanced Programme of Work to enable the Conference to commence negotiations on all the core issues on the agenda.

7. For its part, India remains steadfastly committed to the goal of universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament and has called for complete elimination of nuclear weapons through a step by step process, as also outlined in our Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament submitted to the CD in 2007 (CD/1816). India would like to reiterate its call to undertake the steps outlined in the Working Paper, including negotiation in the CD of a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention, as also called for by the G-21. India has also been tabling an annual resolution in the UN General Assembly on the “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons” since 1982, which enjoys wide support of the membership. Similarly, conscious of the grave dangers posed by unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, India has consistently drawn the attention of the world for over two decades through its annual UNGA resolution on ‘Reducing Nuclear Danger’ and the need to take steps to address it.

8. As a responsible nuclear weapon State, India is committed as per its nuclear doctrine, to maintain credible minimum deterrence with the posture of no-first use and non-use against non-nuclear weapon States. We are prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements to be further negotiated in the CD.

9. Without diminishing the priority we attach to disarmament, India has supported the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD of an FMCT on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, which remains the most suitable basis for negotiations to commence as also endorsed by the GGE on FMCT and the High Level Expert Preparatory Group on FMCT.

10. Commensurate with the importance that it attaches to Nuclear Disarmament Verification, India participated in the GGE on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and has also supported further consideration of the issue through the establishment of another GGE.

11. Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), is another issue of critical importance. India maintains that the work of the GGE on PAROS concluded in March 2019 can serve as a useful basis for future discussions for negotiation of legally binding instruments as well as TCBMs. We hope that substantive work on these issues would begin soon so as to enable the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiation of a legally binding instrument on PAROS.

**Mr. President,**

12. One of the gravest threats to international peace and security, as also highlighted by several Members and the UN Secretary General, is posed by the illicit transfers of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, in particular to terrorists and non-state actors. The UN Register on Conventional Arms (UNROCA) serves as an important tool in this context and we are pleased to note the successful outcome of the GGE on UNROCA in 2019. We look forward to participating in the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States (BMS7) to consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects later this year. India will also participate constructively in the discussions by the GGE on LAWS to explore and agree on possible recommendations based on the 11 guiding principles which have enjoyed consensus support in the GGE.

13. India shares the recognition by the international community of the implications of the scientific and technological developments on international security and disarmament. To advance shared understanding on the issue, India has been tabling a resolution in the UN First Committee to this effect which has been adopted without vote. In this context, India along with Germany, Qatar and Switzerland supported UNIDIR in organizing a one-day focused seminar on this subject in August last year here in Geneva.

14. Having faced the scourge of terrorism for several decades, India is deeply aware of the perilous consequences of the transfer of WMD to non-State actors and terrorists. India continues to highlight the need for Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction through its consensus resolution in the UNGA annually tabled since 2002.

**Mr. President,**

15. India firmly believes in the crucial and positive contribution that the younger generation can make to International peace and security. Cognizant of the need for disarmament and non-proliferation education, India hosted, in January this year, young disarmament diplomats from across the world for the second edition of the Annual Disarmament and International Security Fellowship Programme.

**Mr. President,**

16. India believes that the only way to prevent and effectively resolve the conflicts that we face today is through dialogue based on mutual trust and understanding. We need to work together to find a common ground to enable this Conference to negotiate legally binding instruments, a role entrusted to it by its founders. India stands ready to work with fellow Member States in this collective endeavor.

**Thank you.**

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