

**Statement by Ambassador Pankaj Sharma,
Permanent Representative of India to the
Conference on Disarmament, Geneva during
Plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament
held on May 12, 2021**

Mr. President,

Since this is the first time, I take the floor under your Presidency, I wish to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the CD, coming especially from a country with which India enjoys excellent bilateral relations. I also thank you and your team for your untiring efforts to build consensus on a Programme of Work. I would like to welcome Ambassador Kirsti Kauppi of Finland as our newest Member of the CD family and wish her a successful tenure.

India aligns itself with the G-21 statement delivered by the distinguished delegation of Iraq as the G-21 Coordinator.

Mr. President,

It is unfortunate that the CD, yet again was unable to reach consensus on a Programme of Work. As a result, we have to resort to our work in the form of thematic debates. India has consistently maintained that the CD should adhere to its mandate in accordance with the final document of the SSOD-I, which is to negotiate legally binding instruments. My delegation has demonstrated flexibility, and is going along with this format of thematic debates, so as to continue with our work in the CD, even though our strict preference would have been to stick to the core issues on the CD's agenda, not only just in form and name, but also in substance. We must first consolidate our past gains and build upon the work of more than four decades. This would underline our sincere commitment to the objectives of the CD, as envisaged by the SSOD-I and ensure genuine progress.

I would like to thank the distinguished panellists, Ambassador Jorn Osmundsen and Dr. Pavel Podvig for their

excellent presentations yesterday. Today's thematic debate is under the framework of Agenda Item I "Cessation of Nuclear Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament". It is clear from the agenda item, that our focus, and rightly so, should be on Nuclear Disarmament. In this regard, India maintains that the goal of a nuclear weapons free world can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global, verifiable and non-discriminatory.

Mr. President,

India's annual resolution, on a "Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons", tabled since 1982 in the UNGA requests the CD to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Similarly, another resolution by India on 'Reducing Nuclear Danger', tabled since 1998 in the UNGA, has drawn global attention to the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons carrying unacceptable risks of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. These two resolutions manifest our shared commitment towards the common goal of nuclear disarmament.

India had also suggested a number of steps as part of our Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament submitted to the CD in 2007 (CD/1816), which remain valid to date. These are:

- Reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear weapon States to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons;
- Reduction of the salience of nuclear weapons in the security doctrines;
- Adoption of measures by nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear danger, including the risks of accidental nuclear war,

de-alerting of nuclear-weapons to prevent unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons;

- Negotiation of a global agreement among nuclear weapon States on 'no-first-use' of nuclear-weapons;
- Negotiation of a universal and legally-binding agreement on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States;
- Negotiation of a Convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
- Negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified timeframe.

India reiterates its call to undertake these steps outlined in the working paper, including negotiation in the CD of a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention, as also called for by the Movement of Non-Aligned countries, most recently reiterated in the UNGA Resolution 75/45 as well by the G-21 in its Statement today.

Mr. President,

It is India's considered view that a substantive consideration of the issue of Nuclear Disarmament Verification should be in the context of the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and in their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame. India has been participating in the work of the GGE on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and supported the relevant UNGA resolutions in this regard. India believes that the work on Nuclear Disarmament Verification would lead to enhancing our common understanding

of various aspects of nuclear disarmament verification, which could serve as an essential element of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention. Any work in the framework should build upon the report of the GGE (A/74/90), past work conducted by the Disarmament Commission on the subject of verification, and in accordance with the principles enshrined in the final document of the SSOD-I.

At the same time, such work cannot prejudge the nature and scope of any eventual nuclear disarmament instrument, which would in turn impact on the verification elements to be agreed on and specific to that instrument. India, would also like to underline that work on verification by the GGE cannot be a substitute for the established disarmament machinery – the CD and the Disarmament Commission, addressing the issue of Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

We can also draw upon the experience in verification from the Chemical Weapons Convention, which can serve as an important reference point.

International and Effective Verification is also an important aspect of the agreed mandate for a future treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and our work may also contribute to our enhanced understanding with regard to an FMCT.

I, thank you, Mr. President and pledge India's support to you, as you continue to guide our work in the Conference.
