

Statement by Ambassador Pankaj Sharma, Permanent Representative of India to the CD on Plenary Meeting on the Agenda Item 4: Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons (Negative Security Assurances) on 8 June 2021

Mr. President,

The issue of Negative Security Assurances has been on the Agenda of the Conference since 1979.

2. India aligns itself with the G-21 statement delivered by the distinguished Coordinator from Kenya.
3. I would like to thank Mr. Marc Finaud and Mr. Usman Jadoon, the distinguished panelists for their excellent presentations.
4. The Final Document of the SSOD-I called upon nuclear weapon States to take steps to assure non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We believe that non-nuclear weapon states have a legitimate right to be assured against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. However, such an assurance, in the absence of any concrete steps, has remained a mere aspiration for more than four decades.
5. India has called for progressive steps for de-legitimization of nuclear weapons which we believe is essential for achieving the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Pending their elimination, measures to reduce nuclear dangers arising from accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, and increasing restraint on the use of nuclear weapons are pertinent in this regard. India has therefore called for an agreed multilateral framework that would bring together all states possessing nuclear weapons to discuss measures relating to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and policies. As part of our doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence, India has espoused the policy of “No First Use” against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. We are prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements.
6. The use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to the survival of human kind and the best assurance against their use or threat of use is their complete elimination. India has been consistent in its support for global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. Let me mention that at the thematic debates on 18 and 20 May 2021, we have heard a country referring to new challenges to regional non-proliferation and regional risk of nuclear conflict and in this context making a reference to South Asia. It is ironic to hear expressions of concern from those who have themselves contributed to so much proliferation. Upgrading of arsenals and delivery systems by some states in Asia not only violates their disarmament and non-proliferation obligations but adversely impacts the security environment of others.
7. The First Committee, since 1982, has voted in favour of a resolution sponsored by India calling on this Conference to negotiate a Convention on the Prohibition of Use of Nuclear Weapons. Similarly, India’s annual resolution in the First Committee on Reducing Nuclear Danger, tabled since 1998, is also supported by a large number of Member States.
8. In its Working Paper CD/1816, India had suggested a number of specific measures including a Global No- First Use Agreement as well as negotiation of a universal and legally-binding agreement on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons States.

9. India supported resolution A/RES/75/34 adopted by the General Assembly which recommends that the CD actively continue intensive negotiations on the issue of Negative Security Assurances. As part of the G-21 and NAM, India has supported the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states as a matter of priority.

10. We remain committed to working with other CD members towards the objective of the establishment of a subsidiary body to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.