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Statement by Ambassador Pankaj Sharma, Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament during the Plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on June 14, 2021 with a substantive focus on Agenda Item 5: New Types of Weapons of Mass Destruction and New Systems of Such Weapons; Radiological Weapons

Mr. President,

Let me start by welcoming Ambassador Stuart Harold Comberbach of Zimbabwe, also a G-21 member, to our CD family and assure him of all support and cooperation on behalf of my delegation. I look forward to working with him and his delegation.

2. India aligns itself with the G-21 statement delivered by the distinguished Coordinator from Kenya.

3. I would like to thank Ambassador Yury Ambrazevich and Ms. Liana Fix, the distinguished panelists for their excellent presentations and laying the ground for today's discussions.

4. The international community is acutely conscious of the grave danger posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction to international peace and security. India fully shares this concern and takes all necessary steps to address it.

5. India has been drawing the global attention to the threat posed by terrorists acquiring WMDs, through an annual resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction" in the General Assembly since 2002. The resolution is adopted by the UNGA without a vote with a large number of Member States cosponsoring the resolution. India also supports the General Assembly resolution on "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources".

6. The issue of radiological weapons has been on the agenda of the CD since 1979, following the General Assembly's call in 1978 for concluding a Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons. The issue was considered in Ad Hoc Working Groups

during 1980-83 and in Ad Hoc committees between 1984-1992. In recent years it has been part of discussions in the informal and formal meetings in the CD.

7. The international community has undertaken several important measures to protect and secure nuclear and radiological materials. These include the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and the Code of Conduct for Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. The IAEA has taken various steps to improve the regulatory framework for nuclear security. The UN Security Council Resolution 1540, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and Nuclear Security Summit have also played an important role in this context.

8. While India attaches highest priority to nuclear disarmament, India would not stand in the way on commencing substantive negotiations in the CD with a view to achieving one or more legally binding international instruments that would address the threat posed by new types of WMDs, including radiological weapons, should there be a consensus in the CD in this regard. CD should specifically focus on radiological weapons without duplicating the work being conducted at the IAEA or other international forums and avoid any redundancies. This could be in the form of a Convention containing legal obligations to prevent States from developing, deploying or using such weapons.

9. India attaches high importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention, as examples of non-discriminatory and multilaterally negotiated treaties in the field of disarmament for the total elimination of a specific types of weapons of mass destruction. The success of these Conventions, particularly the Chemical Weapons Convention, with a non-discriminatory verification regime, can serve as a model for the future elimination of nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. President.