

STATEMENT
BY
AMBASSADOR HAMID ALI RAO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, GENEVA
AT THE
2010 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DISARMAMENT COMMISSION
New York
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Mr. Chairman,

It is indeed a pleasure to convey our congratulations on your election to the Chairmanship of this Commission and we assure you the full cooperation of the Indian delegation. We would like to convey our appreciation to the Chairs of the two Working Groups, Mr. Paolo Cuculi of Italy and Mr. Johan Paschalis of South Africa for their diligent efforts.

2. India associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement by the distinguished delegation of Indonesia.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Disarmament Commission has a unique role as the universal deliberative forum for in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues. When member-states showed the requisite political will, the UNDC was able to make consensus recommendations on issues ranging from confidence building measures to establishment of nuclear weapon free-zones. India believes that the Disarmament Commission now has an opportunity and in fact a responsibility to once again draw up guidelines and make recommendations of a universal character reflecting a forward looking vision for a more secure world. The UNDC is the universal institutional forum to achieve our objectives on the basis of dialogue and consensus.

Mr. Chairman,

4. We are meeting today against the background of considerable excitement and high expectations regarding a new momentum for global nuclear disarmament. At least in terms of aspirations and proposals, nuclear disarmament has moved up on the international agenda. A number of statements have been made by leaders; various commissions and initiatives

have presented reports, and, scholars, academics and NGOs have lent their support to nuclear disarmament. The Disarmament Commission should play its rightful role and help progress our shared objective of attaining a world free of nuclear weapons. The Commission can do so by acting as a platform for deliberation resulting in consensus on specific steps that can be taken up to realize the vision of a nuclear weapons free world.

5. India continues to attach the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. India has consistently maintained that nuclear weapons can be eliminated through a non-discriminatory and universal convention along the lines of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. Our support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention providing for elimination of nuclear weapons -within a specified timeframe was reiterated by India's Prime Minister at the 63rd UNGA. This is in keeping with the goal enshrined in the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988. We welcome the progress achieved in the bilateral negotiations between the United States and Russia on further cuts in their nuclear arsenals. States with substantial arsenals should take meaningful steps towards nuclear disarmament.

6. Nuclear Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Pending global and non-discriminatory elimination of nuclear weapons, it is important to take measures to reduce nuclear dangers. Efforts for expansion of nuclear energy and reduction of proliferation risks must go hand in hand.

7. The possibility of terrorist and extremist groups gaining access to nuclear materials is real and could have catastrophic consequences. We are indeed happy that a resolution sponsored by India on this issue in the UNGA continues to garner wide support. We have in that resolution sought to highlight these dangers and to stress the need for national and international cooperative measures to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. India has also welcomed the initiative of President Obama to host the Nuclear Security Summit next month to address this global challenge.

8. India is committed to a voluntary and unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosive testing. We affirm our policy of no first-use and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. As a nuclear weapon state and a responsible member of the international community, India is prepared to negotiate a multilateral and internationally verifiable FMCT in the CD. The obstacles placed in launching these negotiations in the CD cannot but be a cause for disappointment.

9. The CD must also address the priority task of nuclear disarmament. India has proposed a number of measures that can help in moving toward a nuclear-weapons free world, These measures are the following:

- 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;
- Taking into account the global reach and menace of nuclear weapons, 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 time frame.

Mr. Chairman,

10. While it is important that we maintain the momentum, in Working Group I on Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation, we should redouble our efforts to reach consensus this year with regard to Working Group II on Elements for Declaration of 2010 as the Fourth Disarmament Decade.

11. We should aim for finding consensus on elements that will be of enduring validity; that uphold the priority for nuclear disarmament and complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction; that address other dimensions of global security including space security; and strengthening international framework for addressing conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons and prevention of their being used by terrorists. The UNDC, as is its tradition, should focus on these issues of security taking into account global interdependence of peoples and nations.

12. We also need a new idiom for conducting the international discourse, which is now no longer confined to states, but must take into account the wider constituencies -peoples voices from the ground expressed in various ways -NGO's, peace activists, scholars and academics. In sum, the elements we draw up must help build a durable foundation for strengthening security in the 21st century.

13. Mr. Chairman, this forum can play its part in revitalizing multilateral institutions and dialogue to build confidence and strengthen international security through multilaterally negotiated legally binding instruments that can provide assurances of verifiability, irreversibility, compliance and universality.

Mr. Chairman,

We remain committed to ensuring a successful session of the UNDC in the coming weeks and look forward to working towards that end.