

L.51 : Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons.

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Rakesh Sood, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament
October 17, 2002.**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to introduce the Resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" contained in document 67 under Agenda item No.A/C.1/57/L.51 co-sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Congo, Cuba, DPRK, Egypt, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Vietnam and Zambia.

The resolution being introduced today underlines the need to address the threats to international peace and security and to take certain measures to eliminate these threats. The spectre of nuclear threats from nations or groups cannot be wished away as long as such weapons are not eradicated completely. The security that we and our future generations are entitled to can be achieved only by the total prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman, it is a matter of deep concern that nuclear weapons continue to be viewed as a legitimate currency of power, with some States claiming the right to possess them in perpetuity. Doctrines of first use have been revalidated and reaffirmed – there are those who reserve the right to use nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear threats or threats from other weapons of mass destruction.

This threat to humanity must be addressed at all levels. On the level of political commitment backed by legally-binding agreements, nuclear doctrines should be reoriented towards 'no first use' and 'non-use against non-nuclear weapon States'. This would be a good beginning in the process of delegitimising nuclear weapons globally.

The international community should actively participate in a step-by-step process towards a legally-binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. There should remain no scope for justification of the use of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution, as in previous years, reiterates that the use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to the survival of mankind. It refers to the advisory opinion of the International

Court of Justice in 1996 that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict and that a multilateral agreement prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons would strengthen international security and contribute to the creation of a climate that would be decisive for negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The International Court of Justice pronounced the need for negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. The International Court of Justice, by making international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons, provided the legal underpinning to such an instrument in 1996. India remains committed to the goal of global nuclear disarmament. It is in this context that my delegation is bringing before this Committee, once again, as it has done since 1982, this resolution calling for a Convention to be negotiated for prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

The resolution again requests the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach an agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. My delegation would like to see the required flexibility on the part of key delegations in the Conference on Disarmament that would enable the commencement of negotiations on this subject.

The draft resolution that we introduce contains no changes from last year's resolution No. 56/25 B except for technical updating in PP 9.

Mr. Chairman, Indian delegation along with all those who have co-sponsored this resolution would sincerely hope that it will receive the widest possible support in this Committee so that the international community can indeed take such a decisive step towards freeing the world of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.

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