

Statement by Ambassador DB Venkatesh Varma Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva at the 2015 Substantive Session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on April 7, 2015

**Mr Chairman,**

The Indian delegation congratulates you on your election as the Chair of the 2015 Session of the UNDC and assures you of its full cooperation. We would like to thank you for the consultations that you have held to take forward the work of this Commission, including towards the adoption earlier today of the agenda for the next triennial cycle.

2. We associate ourselves with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM.

3. The UNDC meets this year against the backdrop of considerable disappointment that it was not able to adopt recommendations in 2014 but also strong support of the UNGA expressed in resolution A/69/77, which called for its revitalization in this new triennial cycle. India continues to value the role of the Commission - the only body with universal membership and the specialized deliberative leg of the triad of the disarmament machinery put in place by the Final Document of SSOD I.

4. While recalling its past successes in adopting guidelines and recommendations on issues of continuing value to the international community, it is important to stress that current difficulties of the UNDC relate less to any inherent deficiencies in the machinery and more to the lack of political will of member states to invest in multilateral outcomes that would be of enduring value to the entire international community. At a time of growing mistrust and rising international tensions, the role of this Commission as a platform for dialogue and cooperation assumes greater significance. The Commission can do more to improve its functioning by undertaking focused and result oriented discussions on items on its agenda.

**Mr Chairman,**

5. India attaches the highest priority to global, non-discriminatory, verifiable nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a time bound manner. As such, India has supported the proposal put forward by NAM for the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention. Without prejudice to the priority attached to nuclear disarmament, India has also supported the commencement of negotiations of an FMCT in the CD on the basis of the agreed mandate. India participated in the Vienna Conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in the expectation that the renewed attention on the most serious threat to the survival of mankind posed by the use of nuclear weapons would help generate momentum for restraints on use of nuclear weapons and thus correct an imbalance in the international legal discourse that has focussed exclusively on restraints on possession. We have called for a meaningful dialogue amongst all states possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence

and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. India's resolutions in the First Committee – on Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and on Reducing Nuclear Dangers have received support from a large of member states.

**Mr. Chairman,**

6. The UNDC has contributed valuable guidelines in the field of practical CBMs in area of Conventional Weapons and came close to adopting consensus recommendations last year, which in the end remained elusive. There is merit in building on these useful discussions with a view to bridging the remaining gaps. In our view, the key principles on this subject remain valid –the initiation and adoption of CBMs must remain the prerogative of states concerned and subject to their consent and must be implemented in a manner that relevant states are comfortable with.

**Mr Chairman,**

7. The UNGA has mandated the Commission to keep in mind the proposal to include a third item on the 2015 agenda, on which the Chair will be continuing consultations. While our priority remains the agenda item on nuclear disarmament, we will not stand in the way of consensus on a third agenda item, especially if it has the potential to expand the ground for consensus building and help the international community respond in a meaningful manner to new and emerging challenges relevant to the disarmament agenda. The UNDC can also benefit from UNIDIR's expertise in preparing background papers, in so far as there is adequate support for UNIDIR in doing so.

**Mr Chairman.**

8. As we begin a fresh triennial cycle, this year's session assumes special significance in laying firm foundations for future progress. You can rest assured of the full support and cooperation of the Indian delegation.