

**STATEMENT BY MR. RAKESH SOOD, AMBASSADOR,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE  
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT AT THE 57<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF  
THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF UNGA ON OCTOBER 7, 2002**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me congratulate you on your election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee and also assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in the fulfilment of the responsibility entrusted to you.

Since we last met in the shadow of events that shaped the subsequent course of disarmament and international security approaches, we have seen a change in the emphasis of the work of this Committee. A greater sense of urgency has permeated our discourse, while in sharp contrast we have become increasingly aware of the irony that the pace of our multilateral efforts have in fact suffered setbacks. The political will necessary to kick-start the negotiations of long awaited and future oriented disarmament treaties has not been in evidence for yet another year. If we do not get our act together, we are in danger of engaging in activities “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”.

Mr. Chairman, we need to shake ourselves out of our stupor and take concrete initiatives that address both the issues that have remained with us for long and those that have emerged in the post – 11 September 2001 context.

Let me begin with the grave threat that confronts and preoccupies all of us. Addressing the General Assembly last year, the UN Secretary General said “ While the world was unable to prevent the 11 September attacks, there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction. The

greatest danger arises from a non-State group-or even an individual – acquiring and using a nuclear, biological or chemical weapon. Such a weapon could be delivered without the need for any missile or other sophisticated delivery system”. The UN Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has since dealt with the threat posed by terrorism and WMD and has made certain useful recommendations. Further steps need to be taken in the UN framework since this is not a problem specific to a particular country or region. Given the global implications, it will not be sufficient to address the problem behind closed doors of selective clubs. Hence, India proposes to introduce a new resolution in this Committee, requesting the Secretary General to undertake a study on issues related to “Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction”, with the assistance of a Panel of Governmental Experts. Given the need for urgency, the resolution proposes that the study be completed during the first half of 2003 and submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, next year. I hope Mr. Chairman, that all members of this Committee will be able to support this timely initiative.

The issue of nuclear weapons pre-dates our concern with ‘terrorism’ and goes beyond . The indivisible security that we are all entitled to will be possible only when we succeed in eliminating all nuclear weapons from the arsenals of the world. Despite being compelled to exercise our nuclear option, in order to preserve our strategic autonomy, India remains committed to the goal of global nuclear disarmament. My delegation is bringing

before this committee yet again , as it has done since 1982, the resolution calling for a convention to be negotiated for prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

The failure of the existing non-proliferation regime can be attributed to its very discriminatory nature, which has been extended in perpetuity, thus compounding the problem. Until unequivocal undertakings given for the total elimination of nuclear arsenals are honoured, it will be necessary for all nuclear weapon States to take steps to reassure the world that they will reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. There can be no justification for thousands of nuclear weapons to be maintained in a state of hair trigger alert with possible disastrous consequences. The call in the UN Millennium Declaration to seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, including by convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers cannot be ignored any more. India's resolution entitled "Reducing Nuclear Danger" will be presented to this committee for the fifth consecutive year with the expectation that it will receive wider support and convince those who are still skeptical of the need for early concrete action.

As India prepares to assume its responsibilities as the President of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) from 1 January, 2003, let me reiterate the commitment of my country to participate constructively, and in good faith, in the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations in order to develop a non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty to prohibit the future production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. India is also committed to prevent the further militarisation and weaponisation of outer space, which should be preserved for the full range of cooperative, peaceful and developmental activities. These commitments had prompted India to support the compromise Amorim Proposal as a possible way forward to commence substantive work in the CD. Since that proposal could not lead

to a consensus among all members, we have welcomed the cross-group initiative of five Ambassadors and expressed our readiness to support it, if it can lead us out of the long prevailing stalemate at the Conference.

As President-designate to the CD, India, along with the outgoing President from Hungary will engage in extensive consultations on the margins of this Committee in an attempt to untie the Gordian knot. Our attempt will not be to seek procedural fixes, but to ascertain whether there is preparedness on the part of all concerned to display the necessary political will to find a solution. The validity of multilateral disarmament negotiations in the sole forum designated for the purpose needs to be upheld. It should be possible for us to translate our lamentations about the current state of global security issues into a collective effort to breath life into the CD so that it can be put to work for the collective good.

India participated actively in the work of the panel of governmental experts established to prepare a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, which has completed its work this year. We have also followed with interest other initiatives aimed at dealing with the issue of missiles. India wishes to see the norms against the proliferation of missiles strengthened through transparent, multilateral agreements on the basis of equal and undiminished security, that also ensure that civilian space related applications are not adversely affected.

There has been in recent years an excessive reliance on export controls, in the name of non-proliferation, by select groups of countries. While such measures have not been effective, denial of so called dual-use technology and equipment have done immense damage to the peaceful developmental efforts of developing countries in a number of spheres of economic activity. There is a need for an effective and transparent system of export controls that would conform to the objectives of non-proliferation without affecting peaceful applications of these

technologies. There is no place for discriminatory mechanisms, some of which run contrary to existing treaty provisions, that deprive developing countries of the benefits of path-breaking scientific and technological developments. In order to address this critical issue, India will bring to this Committee, as it has done since 1989, a resolution entitled "Role of Science and Technology in the Context of International Security and Disarmament."

All of us have a stake in ensuring that all the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention are implemented fully and effectively. As an original State Party to this non-discriminatory treaty, India is fully committed to this task. We are also relieved that certain unhealthy developments that threatened the working of the OPCW have been resolved with the cooperation of all States Parties.

Mr. Chairman, India is deeply concerned by the circumstances in which the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention last year had to be abruptly adjourned. The developments since then also do not bode well for the resumed Review Conference this year. The anthrax incidents of last year, instead of prompting the world community to act collectively to challenge the threat of Biological Weapons, have instead led to a path that rejects the framework for multilateral action and may threaten the norm that has existed for thirty years. While national implementation measures and certain group efforts may be worth pursuing, they cannot substitute for meaningful multilateral efforts to strengthen the Convention. We hope that the resumed Review Conference can be saved from failure by at least reaching agreement on a modest follow up work in the truly multilateral context. At a time when the threat from BW proliferation and bioterrorism is of great concern to the people, it would be tragic to undermine the norm established by the BWC.

The Second Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) fortunately had greater success by expanding the scope of the

Convention to cover non-international armed conflicts and by establishing a Group of Governmental Experts to address the issue of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM). India has been an active participant in the process, having ratified all its Protocols, including the Amended Protocol on landmines. As the designate Chair of the Meeting of States Parties later this year, we hope to be able to carry forward the current work in a realistic manner.

The work of the Panel on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) dealing with the issue off marking and record keeping for the tracing of illicit arms has commenced its work this year. We appreciate the confidence reposed in the election of India by acclamation as Chairman of the Panel and hope to successfully complete the task assigned to it with the cooperation of all the members of the panel.

India welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, in which India was represented. We note in particular the emphasis in the report for new thinking and need for reinvigorated international efforts and cooperation in this field. There is an urgent need to strengthen the societal dimensions of disarmament in which the academic/research/NGO communities can make a substantial contribution.

Mr. Chairman, this year we have all been preoccupied with dealing with terrorism which transcends borders. At the same time we have witnessed a reluctance to urgently address long term concerns that have remained with us. International law is based on creation of global norms that sovereign states choose to observe. Collective acceptance creates legitimisation for there exists no global sovereign. History teaches us that unilateral actions or those taken by exclusive alliances that do not meet the test of legitimacy weaken the norms of international law. In dealing with problems of global reach and implications, we need to act collectively using non-

discriminatory and transparent approaches in an inclusive manner. We need , through our action in this Committee , to re-

establish the validity and effectiveness of multilateral efforts.