



**STATEMENT BY MR. BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL, MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION AT THE 61ST
SESSION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 6, 2006**

Madam Chairperson,

Please accept my delegation's warm felicitations on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly. We are most happy to see in this position an illustrious representative of Norway, a country that has distinguished itself in the advocacy of peace and disarmament. You have our full cooperation and support.

2. The United Nations can play a central role in making the international community's yearning for general and complete disarmament a reality. The First Committee, tasked to deal with disarmament and related international security questions, is the instrument for achieving this as it provides a universal forum for Member States to assess the current global security environment, identify threats to international peace and security and recommend concrete measures to combat them.

3. The threats we face today are global in their character and, therefore, need global solutions. No State possesses the capability to confront them by itself. The imperative of cooperation has never been more evident. However, collective security, which inspired the founders of the United Nations, remains only an idea, with security of States being largely predicated on national capabilities. This imperils and weakens the international security system.

4. It is thus the lack of a shared perspective that has stalled the Conference on Disarmament and prevented consensus on the disarmament and non-proliferation segment of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The Conference on Disarmament has failed to reach agreement on its programme of work. Procedural fixes and debates have failed in bridging these differences. India remains committed, as always, to support initiatives that foster a consensus based on priorities and concerns of all states to break the deadlock in the Conference.

5. An important component of international security is energy security. As the global economy expands, spurred by high growth rates in emerging economies, the global demand for energy will dramatically increase. Given the imperatives of sustainable development and the risks from climate change, nuclear energy offers us an environment-friendly source for meeting the global demand. We believe there is an immense opportunity for international cooperation combining with indigenous national efforts to ensure diversified energy mix for sustainable development.

6. Another looming danger is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and global terrorism. The growing possibility of terrorists gaining access to weapons of mass destruction has added a new and dangerous dimension to the threat of WMDs. The existence of networks of proliferators, aided and abetted by elements within state structures, has further aggravated this threat. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that: (i) States renew their commitment to fulfil their responsibility to fully abide by their non-proliferation and disarmament obligations, assumed voluntarily under various legal instruments; (ii) States take seriously requisite measures to deny non-State actors, including terrorists, access to weapons of mass destruction as well as related equipment, materials and technologies.

7. India's own impeccable record on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been recognized and appreciated by the international community. Enactment of a comprehensive legislation by us on prevention of unlawful activities regarding WMDs by our Parliament in June 2005 strengthened the existing legal framework for this purpose. We have also updated our export control regulations and lists to reflect the best international practices on export controls. We shall continue to ensure that India will never be a source of proliferation.

8. It is, however, necessary that we do not lose sight of the goal of nuclear disarmament, which should remain the international community's highest priority. Progress towards nuclear disarmament has unfortunately stalled and the global disarmament machinery remains paralysed leading to disquiet among the international community. Non-proliferation and disarmament ought to be mutually reinforcing. This is a challenge for the UN General Assembly to take up.

9. The very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, resolution 1(1) of 1946, sought the elimination, from national armaments, of atomic weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We can commemorate the glorious vision on its 60th anniversary by renewing our commitment to general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. Member States embraced this objective unanimously in 1978, at the first special session of the

General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In our view, another special session may provide the much-needed impetus to the consensus achieved in 1978 and help to evolve forward-looking approaches, taking into account the concerns and priorities of all Member States.

Madam Chairperson,

10. The principles of restraint and responsibility are the sheet anchor of India's nuclear doctrine. While maintaining a credible minimum deterrent, there has been no dilution of India's commitment to nuclear disarmament, which remains a core objective of India's foreign policy. This is so because India believes that its security, as indeed of the entire world, would be enhanced in a nuclear-weapon free world. India's nuclear doctrine espousing no-first use per se and the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States, is itself a minimalist doctrine reflecting our civilisational abhorrence of violence and destruction.

11. India has thus continued to observe a voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive tests. India is ready to join negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. On this basis, India had joined the consensus in the 1993 General Assembly Resolution on this subject.

12. It may be recalled that our late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had presented at the 1988 session of the General Assembly an Action Plan for nuclear disarmament within a specific timeframe. To reaffirm India's abiding commitment to the goal of global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament and to outline concrete steps, towards a nuclear-weapon free world, we hereby present a Working Paper, distributed with my statement, which seeks to:

- Reaffirm the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear weapon States to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons;
- Reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines;
- Reduce nuclear danger, including the risks of accidental nuclear war, by de-alerting of nuclear-weapons to prevent unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons;
- Negotiate a global agreement among nuclear weapon States on 'no-first-use' of nuclear-weapons;

- Negotiate a universal and legally-binding agreement on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States;
- Negotiate a Convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
- Negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their time-bound destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons.

13. The steps mentioned in the paper are not exhaustive nor do they exclude other measures for achieving the same goal. They are also not listed priority-wise nor have any implementation-specific sequencing. We hope that our Paper will spur dialogue among States on both the need and the means to nuclear disarmament.

14. Abiding by your appeal to keep statements short, we propose to utilize the thematic debate to outline our approaches on the issues related to biological weapons, small arms and light weapons and other conventional weapons. For now, we wish only to underline the importance that we attach to the success of the BTWC and CCW review conferences later this year.

15. Meanwhile, I hope the deliberations in the First Committee will meet our expectations and enhance international peace and security.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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A Working Paper by India on Nuclear Disarmament

The international community has long recognised that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to humankind and therefore, it is essential for it to take urgent steps towards realisation of the goal of their complete elimination. The UN General Assembly, in its very first resolution, Resolution 1(I) of 1946, adopted unanimously, sought the elimination, from national armaments, of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction and to use of atomic energy only for peaceful purposes, a goal that has been reaffirmed by the General Assembly on several occasions thereafter.

2. The Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-I), the only document on nuclear disarmament adopted by consensus by all

member States, affirmed and accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament and outlined concrete steps to achieve that objective. It pointed out that the achievement of nuclear disarmament would require urgent negotiation of agreements, at appropriate stages, and with adequate measures of verification satisfactory to the States concerned, for (i) the cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear weapon systems; (ii) the cessation of production of all types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and of the production of fissionable material for weapon purposes; and (iii) a comprehensive, phased programme with agreed timeframes, whenever possible, for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible time. It emphasized that in the task of achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament, all nuclear weapon States, in particular those among them that possess the most important nuclear arsenals, bear a special responsibility. It also emphasized that the process of nuclear disarmament should be carried out in such a way and requires measures to ensure that the security of all States is guaranteed at progressively lower levels of nuclear armaments. The principles and objectives, which were agreed by all, remain of continuing relevance and need to be reaffirmed by the international community.

3. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) concluded in 1996 that: "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." The UN Millennium Declaration reiterated the commitment of the Member States of the United Nations to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim. Various proposals for nuclear disarmament have since been considered, including in a number of studies ranging from the Canberra Commission to the more recent WMD Commission. The Pugwash Movement and the NGO Community have also made valuable contributions to the nuclear disarmament discourse.

4. The Non-aligned Movement, described as the largest peace movement in history, has always accorded the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. The NAM Summit has recently reaffirmed the Movement's principled positions on nuclear disarmament and emphasized the necessity to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time, including a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

5. The international community is far from achieving the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, though there has been some progress in this regard. In particular the Russian Federation and the United States have taken steps to reduce their nuclear weapons stockpiles, and India welcomes such efforts. Notwithstanding these reductions the global threat posed by nuclear weapons has not subsided. In recent years another dimension has been added by the possibility that terrorists and other non-State actors may acquire and use weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons and so-called "dirty-bombs".

6. Despite the end of the cold war, the international security situation is still characterised by lack of trust and political will amongst states to make progress towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The non-nuclear-weapon States have serious concerns about the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament. The absence of any reference whatsoever to disarmament and non-proliferation in the 2005 World Summit Outcome underscored this fact. The Final Document of SSOD-I enshrined the essential principle of mutually reinforcing linkage between disarmament and non-proliferation. States that have voluntarily undertaken disarmament and non-proliferation obligations under respective treaties must implement them fully and faithfully.

7. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Effective, credible and comprehensive system of export controls, which at the same time do not

hinder legitimate applications of science and technology for peaceful and developmental purposes, could be building blocks of a move towards universally acceptable non-discriminatory norms and effective international non-proliferation arrangements. Non-proliferation policies must also be forward looking, so as to allow for the expansion of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for countries desirous of increasing the share of nuclear energy as a non-polluting energy source, in a manner that is safe, secure and proliferation resistant.

8. International efforts in nuclear disarmament would yield tangible results when they are backed by an international consensus. The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. The Disarmament Commission is the universal deliberative forum. The UN Charter endows the General Assembly with a responsibility on disarmament matters. The General Assembly must explore the convening of the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament, subject to consensus on its objectives and agenda. These remain the best fora to enable the emergence of a consensus and to make effective contribution to the goal of nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide.

9. India has played an active role in the international community's endeavours towards nuclear disarmament. India was the first to call for a ban on nuclear testing in 1954 and a non-discriminatory treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as distinct from non-dissemination, in 1965. India's proposition on non-proliferation was predicated on the principle that the progressive steps towards elimination of weapons of mass destruction must be based on a balance of obligations between those who possess such weapons and those who do not. In 1978, India proposed negotiation for an international convention that would prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In 1982, India called for a 'nuclear freeze'- a prohibition on production of fissile materials for weapons, on production of nuclear weapons and related delivery systems.

10. In 1988, India presented the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan to the General Assembly that provided a holistic framework seeking negotiations for a time-bound commitment for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons to usher in a world free of nuclear weapons and rooted in non-violence. This Action Plan was by far the most comprehensive initiative on nuclear disarmament, covering issues ranging from nuclear testing, fissile material for nuclear weapons to a time bound elimination of stockpiles. India, together with 27 other members of the Group of 21, in August 1996, presented to the Conference on Disarmament a Programme of Action, as contained in document CD/1419, for the elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified time frame. This was further endorsed by the Group of 21 in documents CD/1570 and CD/1571.

11. So long as the States that possess nuclear weapons continue to believe that nuclear weapons constitute a critical element of their security strategy, the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons will remain elusive and distant. Therefore, reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in strategic and security doctrines and policies is essential for realizing the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Alignment of nuclear doctrines to a posture of 'no-first-use' and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States by all nuclear weapon States will be an important step towards achieving this objective.

12. The non-nuclear weapon States have persistently sought legally-binding assurances from the nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear-weapons against them. They have regarded the security assurances provided so far by the nuclear-weapon States as inadequate, conditional and non-binding. Legally-binding assurances on use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States would further reduce the nuclear danger and mitigate the sense of insecurity among non-nuclear weapon States and, thereby, strengthen the non-proliferation regime. India firmly supports a policy of 'no-first use' and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States. India is ready to join multilateral

negotiations to enshrine its commitment to no-first-use and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States in legally binding agreements. An agreement among the States possessing nuclear weapons on a global 'no-first-use' posture will engender strategic stability and reduce the danger of the accidental or unintended use of nuclear weapons.

13. The international community succeeded in negotiating Conventions on total elimination of biological and chemical weapons mainly because their use had already been prohibited through the 1925 Geneva Protocol and States were prepared to relinquish these weapons as they did not foresee the likelihood of their use or their contribution to ensuring security. There is no reason why nuclear weapons cannot be eliminated in the same manner. A prohibition on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be essential for eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

14. The General Assembly resolution on a "Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons", first presented by India in 1982, requests the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. The resolution reflects India's belief that a multilateral, universal and binding agreement prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would help generate necessary political will among States possessing nuclear weapons to engage in negotiations leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons; it would also contribute to mitigation of the nuclear threat in the interim, pending the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

15. The General Assembly resolution on "Reducing Nuclear Danger" manifests India's conviction that the hair-trigger posture of nuclear forces carries the risk of unintentional, unauthorized or accidental use of nuclear weapons leading to a nuclear war with catastrophic consequences. The very real danger posed by the increased risk of systems and components falling into the hands of non-State actors or rogue actors within State structures, has further aggravated the existing dangers. Unilateral, bilateral and regional confidence-building measures, could supplement international agreements in reducing nuclear danger as also the risk of accidental nuclear war.

16. Progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament will require a climate of mutual confidence in the international community to conclude universal non-discriminatory and verifiable prohibitions on nuclear weapons leading to their complete elimination. No effort must be spared in consensus building to this end.

17. We would urge the international community to intensify dialogue, so as to build a consensus that strengthens the ability of the international community to initiate concrete steps towards achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament based on the following elements:

- 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 timeframe.

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