

India Statement
by
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at the Informal Consultative Meetings convened by the
Chair of the High Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group
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Madam Chair, Director General Heidi Hulan, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

India congratulates you on your assumption of this important responsibility of chairing the High Level Expert Preparatory Group. Canada has played a leading role in the arena of global disarmament and non-proliferation. We would like to recall the significant contribution of Ambassador Gerald Shannon in the context of FMCT, a subject which brings us together here today.

This meeting provides an important opportunity for all interested delegations to express their views which will inform the discussions in the High Level Expert Preparatory Group.

Madam Chair,

India's commitment to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament within a specified timeframe has been firm and consistent. Pursuant to the UNGA Resolution 68/32, India has supported NAM's proposal for a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention to be negotiated in the CD. India joined the G21 Working Paper CD/2067 submitted in the CD last year. Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support negotiations on a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable FMCT in the CD on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.

UNGA Resolution 48/75L adopted by consensus in 1993 envisaged FMCT as a significant contribution to non-proliferation in all its aspects. India co-sponsored this resolution and has supported all subsequent FMCT resolutions in the UNGA. India supported the establishment of an Adhoc committee on an FMCT in the CD in 1995 and in 1998 and did not stand in the way of consensus in 2009 on CD/1864 which provided *inter alia* for establishment of a Working Group to negotiate an FMCT.

Madam Chair,

India participated in the GGE on FMCT established pursuant to the UNGA Resolution 67/53 of 2012 and welcomed its consensus Report. At the time of the adoption of this resolution, we stated that the work of the GGE amounted to neither pre-negotiations nor negotiations on an FMCT, which should take place in the CD on the basis of the agreed mandate. The GGE Report was of immense value in bringing together, Governmental experts from 25 countries, ably chaired by Ambassador Elissa Golberg, who brought to bear varied but enriching perspectives on various aspects of a future treaty thus deepening our understanding of its many complexities, which only a serious, non-polemical and interactive discussion can bring forth. The GGE Report underlined that the Treaty and its negotiation in the CD remains a priority enjoying broad international support and CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein

remains the most suitable basis on which future negotiations should commence. In our view, this was the most significant conclusion of the GGE. The Report is valuable reference even though it does not bind the hands of future negotiators and is without prejudice to national positions. The Report was the result of a most thorough inter-governmental assessment of FMCT in recent years, and we had hoped that it would impart momentum for the commencement of FMCT negotiations in the CD.

Madam Chair,

The establishment of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group under the UNGA Resolution 71/259 of 2016 should not replace the CD as the forum for the negotiations of an FMCT. Therefore, the work of this Group, in our view amounts to neither pre-negotiations nor negotiations on an FMCT, which should take place in the CD on the basis of the agreed mandate. There is necessity of participation of all stakeholders in FMCT negotiations, which can be ensured in the CD. According to our understanding this Group will conduct its work in accordance with established practices of a GGE, including the principle of consensus. India supports the CD as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and hopes that its member states will redouble efforts to enable the Conference to commence substantive work at an early date.

Madam Chair,

My delegation would like to express its full cooperation and support to you for a successful meeting.

Thank you!