

**Statement by Ambassador (Dr.) Pankaj Sharma, Permanent Representative  
of India to the Conference on Disarmament during the formal Plenary  
meeting of the Conference on Disarmament  
[January 21, 2019]**

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Members of the Secretariat,  
Excellencies,  
Fellow Members,

My delegation would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the First Presidency of the CD for this year, especially from a country that I have had the privilege to serve in. My delegation assures you of its full cooperation and support in steering our deliberations to a successful outcome.

2. This is an important year, particularly in the wake of a number of significant global developments that took place last year. The international community has great hopes and is banking on the outcomes emerging from our work here. We must work towards developing the right atmosphere and political will to engage constructively on all items on the agenda of the CD. Significant work was carried out last year, as also noted by you and other speakers before me, and it is now incumbent on us to take it forward and ensure that the CD delivers on its mandate. If we don't do so, it will only encourage sceptics and fuel despair and frustration. None of us wish that. Questions have been raised about the effectiveness and efficacy of the CD, and even its relevance. Attempts have been made to discover alternate forums. In our view, the CD still remains the most appropriate and relevant forum. It enjoys the legitimacy through its mandate, membership and rules including consensus-based decision making for negotiating legally binding instruments for strengthening international peace and security. On its part, India stands ready to support your efforts as well as the subsequent Presidencies for a productive session this year.

3. On a personal note, I would like to thank you and other colleagues for welcoming me. It is a great honour and privilege for me to be representing my country in this august body and succeed a long list of my distinguished predecessors. While this is my stint at the CD, I am not new to the CD and have followed it as well as other disarmament bodies for more than seventeen years. Like every expert and diplomat present in this room, it has been my wish to work for the CD and I am pleased that I can do so now.

4. I look forward to working with all of you towards achieving our collective vision and goals and a possible breakthrough as mentioned by the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

5. In concluding, let me wish you all a very happy new year and hope that it is a truly happy one. As is said in Russian, hope dies only in the end.

I thank you Mr. President.

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