

**Statement by Ambassador (Dr.) Pankaj Sharma,  
Permanent Representative of India to the  
Conference on Disarmament during the Plenary meeting of  
the Conference on Disarmament on February 28, 2019 on the  
draft decision presented by the UK Presidency**

Mr. President

At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in commending you for having so ably chaired the High-Level Segment of the Conference.

My delegation thanks you for your sustained efforts to advance our substantive work and the draft decision CD/WP.619 shared with us in this regard. Your proposal lays a good foundation for further discussions with the eventual objective of agreeing on a Programme of Work.

While our capital is examining the draft decision, I would like to offer some preliminary comments.

Your proposal builds upon the substantive work carried out last year under the framework of Subsidiary Bodies. While we would have preferred negotiating mandates for legally binding instruments, it is our understanding that the discussions undertaken under the proposed framework would lead to commencement of negotiations on legally binding instruments on all four core issues of the CD. This necessitates that we retain the format of Subsidiary Bodies for different issues and not merge them into one Subsidiary Body. Merging them in one Subsidiary Body would deprive us of the opportunity of having focused discussions on various issues.

In this context, I would like to recall that several speakers at the High Level Segment, including my own, had highlighted the importance of commencing negotiations on FMCT and had noted

that this was the most mature issue ready for negotiations. Therefore, we welcome and support your proposal for establishment of Subsidiary Body 2 on fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. We would prefer retention of the Subsidiary Body as proposed by you rather than the Subsidiary Body of last year on Agenda Item 2, with a general focus on fissile material. According to us, this is one area in which the Conference can make concrete progress.

Like other delegations have pointed out, we would prefer not to limit the scope of discussions of the Subsidiary Bodies to the elements listed in your proposal perhaps we could find a fix by including the words, inter alia, or including.

As to the issue of formal and informal meeting, they should be scheduled in a way so as to provide a fair chance to all the delegations to express their views and put their statements on record. The first and last meeting being the only formal sessions might appear restrictive. Therefore, three out of ten or as many as required may be formal in nature. This would impart an element of formality while giving coordinators the requisite flexibility.

I Thank you Mr. President.

\*\*\*