Explanation of Vote by Indian Delegation

Cluster 1: Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Chairman,

The Indian delegation has requested the floor to explain its vote on resolutions under Cluster 1.

L-6 “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”

India has abstained on the resolution “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East” as a whole, as contained in document L.6, and has voted against its preambular paragraph 6, as it believes that it was necessary to limit the focus of this resolution to the region that it intends to address.

According to customary international law, as encapsulated in the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, States adhere to treaties considered to be in consonance with their national interest based on their freely exercised sovereign choice. The call for those States remaining outside the NPT to accede to it and to accept IAEA safeguards on all their nuclear activities is at variance with this principle. Our long-standing position on the NPT is well known.

L-9 “Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes”

Mr. Chairman,

India has joined the consensus on the resolution “Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes”, as contained in document L.9. However, the Indian delegation would like to state its position with regard to operative paragraph 8 of the resolution.

India has been fully supportive of the central objective of this resolution and it was one among the few countries, which have supported the retention of radiological weapons on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, as we believe that the international community must remain vigilant to the grave dangers posed by nuclear or radioactive waste and the possibility of their military use.

Operative paragraph 8 of the resolution refers to the Joint Convention on the
Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. As a developing country, India places high importance not only on the safety but also on the full utilization of all aspects of the fuel cycle, to derive maximum benefits. Spent fuel is, therefore, not just a waste but also a valuable resource, a position that India has been consistently supporting at the IAEA.

I-12 “Nuclear Weapon Free Southern Hemisphere and Adjacent Areas”

Mr. Chairman,

As regards the resolution “Nuclear Weapon Free Southern Hemisphere and Adjacent Areas,” contained in document L.12, India has voted against last three words “and South Asia” of operative paragraph 5 and the operative paragraph 5, as a whole. India has abstained on the resolution as a whole.

Operative paragraph 5 of the resolution recognizes the well-established principle that nuclear weapon free zones must be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. This principle has not been applied, however, in calling for the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in South Asia. This specific proposal logically has no greater validity than the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones in many other parts of the world such as in East Asia, Western Europe or North America. We have, therefore, voted against operative paragraph 5 and abstained on the resolution as a whole.

I-36 “Nuclear Disarmament”

Mr. Chairman,

India has abstained on resolution “nuclear disarmament”, as contained in document L.36. It has been India’s consistent view that the threat posed by nuclear weapons can only be addressed through their complete elimination in a progressive and systematic manner. As stated by our Prime Minister in parliament recently, India’s commitment to work for universal nuclear disarmament will remain our core concern. We very much share the objective of the resolution, which is to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons and establish a nuclear weapon free world.

We have, however, been constrained to abstain on the resolution since it incorporates references to NPT, on which India’s position is well known. Our vote in no way detracts from our support for the longstanding position of the non-aligned movement on nuclear disarmament, which has accorded the highest priority to this goal.