Introduction of the resolutions "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" and "Reducing Nuclear Danger" in the First Committee of the 62nd UNGA

Statement by Jayant Prasad, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva.

New York, October 18, 2007

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

While awaiting the printing of L series documents, specifically L.21 and L.23, which are scheduled to appear on 22nd October, I am taking the floor to introduce two resolutions tabled by India under the cluster on nuclear disarmament. Their text has been transmitted earlier this afternoon to the New York based missions of all Member States.

First, on behalf of the co-sponsors, I would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons."

The resolution underlines that the use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to the survival of mankind. At the last Non-aligned Summit, held at Havana, the participating heads of State or Government had stressed their concern at the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use.

The resolution reflects the belief of the co-sponsors that a multilateral, universal and legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons will contribute to the mitigation of the nuclear threat and create a climate for negotiations for an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. It will, thus, serve as an important interim measure until we reach agreement on a step-by-step process for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The proposed convention will also serve to diminish the salience of nuclear weapons in maintaining international security and contribute to changes in doctrines, policies, attitudes and institutions required for a nuclear weapon free world.

The operative part of the resolution reiterates the call to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention on prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. A positive vote for this resolution will be a vote by the international community in favour of a decisive step
towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr Chairperson,

I also have the honour to introduce the draft resolution on "Reducing Nuclear Danger."

All constituents of the United Nations had unanimously agreed in 1978 that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind. The Member States had also agreed that effective measures of nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority.

While the international consensus to ban nuclear weapons gains greater momentum, we have been advocating meanwhile measures to mitigate the dangers posed by such weapons in order to safeguard the collective security interests of the UN Member States.

The resolution offers modest and pragmatic proposals for the safety and security of mankind, pending the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The operative part of the resolution calls for a review of nuclear doctrines, as also immediate steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through the de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons and requests the Nuclear Weapon States to take measures to implement the suggested steps.

The resolution manifests the conviction of the co-sponsors that the hair-trigger posture of nuclear forces carries the unacceptable risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, which could have catastrophic consequences. The threat posed by the increased risk of nuclear weapons or its components falling into the hands of non-State actors, including terrorists, has further aggravated the existing dangers.

A positive vote for this resolution will be a reaffirmation by the international community to take decisive steps towards reducing nuclear danger, as also the unnecessary risk of accidental nuclear war.