Mr. Chairman, India has joined the consensus on L.28/Rev1 and voted for OP 7 of the resolution tabled by the Russian Federation and the United States. As the countries with the largest nuclear arsenals, the sponsors bear a special responsibility for nuclear disarmament. We appreciate the significance of the revitalisation of the Russia-U.S. bilateral arms control process and we welcome the new Russia-U.S. agreement to reduce their strategic nuclear arms. Between them the two sponsors still hold more than 90% of the nuclear weapons in the world and the new START is a step in the right direction. As we have repeatedly stressed, there is need for a step by step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework for achieving global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

With regard to an FMCT, India’s position has been consistent. Without prejudice to the highest priority we attach to the goal of nuclear disarmament, India supports the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a multilateral, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable FMCT that meets India’s national security interests. India is a nuclear weapon state and a responsible member of the world community, and would approach these negotiations as such.

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