EOV on L40 "Ethical Imperatives for a Nuclear Weapon Free World"

India has attached particular importance to L40 - a resolution tabled for the first time by South Africa highlighting the ethical dimension of nuclear disarmament. We recall our support for a number of the previous proposals and resolutions mentioned in this resolution, including the first resolution of the UNGA in 1946 and the Final Document of SSOD I. In fact this resolution is a reminder of the long struggle for nuclear disarmament that has been waged in the UNGA and outside in which India has played a leading role, along with other NAM states.

India agrees with several provisions of this resolution, in particular its acknowledgement that nuclear disarmament is a global public good of the highest order. We support the ICJ Advisory Opinion, that there exists a legal obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In this regard India has once again cosponsored the relevant resolution tabled by Malaysia contained in L51 and has supported the NAM proposal for the commencement of negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention in the CD.

Since the dawn of the nuclear age, the use of nuclear weapons have posed a most serious threat to the survival of humanity and the continuation of civilization. As such they pose ethical and moral dilemmas of a fundamental nature - which must inform consideration by the international community on all matters relating to nuclear weapons and on nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons have been entrenched in the security policies of a number of states, whose total population now exceeds those that do not.

The global elimination of nuclear weapons will require progressive steps of reduction of their military utility, reduction of their role in security policies and a universal commitment with a global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework for nuclear disarmament. Until that stage is accomplished by common agreement, reflected in specific international legal instruments, questions relating to the immorality of nuclear weapons have to be balanced by the sovereign responsibility of states to protect their people in a nuclearized global order put together on the pillars of nuclear deterrence. India's nuclear doctrine of credible minimum deterrence, with a no-first use posture, seeks to strike this very balance.

The illegality of nuclear weapons cannot just be a matter of *opinio juris*; it is necessary for the international community to negotiate and conclude specific legal instruments for that purpose. India has proposed a Convention on the Prohibition of Use of Nuclear Weapons and has supported a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention. We remain prepared to take forward these proposals in the Conference on Disarmament.

The moral and ethical argument complements the legal order but cannot substitute for it. Since the resolution is not clear as to the correlation between means and ends and hence its ability to take forward the nuclear disarmament discourse in an inclusive and purposeful manner, India has decided to abstain on this resolution. India remains open to further discussions with its sponsors in the future.