



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS
820 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017 • TEL: (212) 370-3988/89 FAX: (212) 953-2038 E-MAIL: nepal@un.int
Please check against delivery

Statement by H. E. Mr. Murari Raj Sharma,
Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, at the General Debate of the
First Committee of the 57th Session of the General Assembly
(New York: October 4, 2002)

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to congratulate you at your well-deserved election as Chairman of the First Committee and express my delegation's full confidence in your leadership. Our warm felicitations are also go to the other members of the bureau.

We commend the secretary general for his consistent attempts to promote disarmament and peace. Let me also thank Mr. Jayanth Dhanapala, Under Secretary General, for his comprehensive opening remarks early at this general debate.

Mr. Chairman,

Last one year has been a mixed bag of advances and set backs in the field of disarmament. Progress in reducing the threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction has been accompanied by the tremendous sharpening of horrible weapons technologies. The balance sheet has tilted, however, more to the negative side.

It hardly bodes well for the global community. Efforts, therefore, are critical to quicken the pace of disarmament in order to realise the purposes of the United Nations Charter and the objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal is a persistent supporter of disarmament as a means to promote international peace and security; and nuclear disarmament remains at the top of its priorities. World peace must find its feet in mutual trust and respect, not in the threat of annihilation.

We welcome the US-Russia agreement to reduce the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons. At the same time, the scrapping of the ABM Treaty, which has long been a factor of stability, also disturbs us, as it is likely to open a crack for a new arms race.

The ultimate security from nuclear weapons lies in their total elimination. We therefore urge all declared and undeclared nuclear powers to show commitment and resolve to get rid of their nuclear arsenals within a technically feasible time frame

Many states never harboured nuclear ambition and many others shunned that option out of conscience. We applaud Cuba for joining the category of such nations by acceding to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Tlatelolco Treaty.

But some have sought these weapons overtly or covertly, undermining the objective of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the larger goal of complete nuclear disarmament.

This tendency is unlikely to stop unless nuclear weapons are delegitimised and unless nuclear powers make concrete advances towards eradicating these horrendous arms. To cling to those deadly weapons themselves and asking others to forego the option of acquiring them would be a patent example of double standards, which these powers must avoid.

Just when progress in actual reduction of nuclear arms is disheartening, measures to build confidence and to curb further growth and proliferation of such weapons have stalled or been disappointingly slow.

For instance, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is yet to come into force lacking sufficient ratifications. The proposed fissile material cut off treaty, which should be pursued with a sense of urgency, has not got off the ground.

Governments, on their own and regionally, have been attempting to rid their countries and regions of nuclear weapons, which is very encouraging. In this context, my delegation welcomes the endeavour of Central Asian countries to establish a nuclear-weapons-free zone in their region.

We also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with IAEA safeguards and on the South Asian rivals not to rattle their nuclear sabres.

The guarantees against the threat or use of nuclear weapons can be a potent confidence building measure, both as an interim step and as an incentive for the attainment of total nuclear disarmament.

Other weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical and biological ones, should have no place in a civilised world. Sadly the faltering of the proposed protocol on Biological Weapons Convention does not bode well, but we hope the resumed review conference on BWC will be able to achieve its objective.

Effective enforcement of various disarmament treaties has always been problematic. In this context, we call on Iraq to comply with the relevant UN resolutions and let the inspectors back in as well as on the global community to respect the UN Charter in its actions.

Though "thin" in its recommendations, the consensus of governmental experts on the issue of missiles is encouraging, as it will afford a basis to establish multilateral norms in this respect.

Opposed to anti-personnel landmines, Nepal has actively participated in the evolution of the convention to control them, and our moral commitment to it remains strong. When the time is ripe, we will be happy to join the rank of those that have the privilege of becoming a party to that very important global treaty.

It will but be outrageous to cast the dark shadow of a terrible arms race on outer space, the seabed and Antarctica, and Nepal opposes any effort to weaponise these sensitive spheres.

A victim of Maoist terrorism for half a decade by now, Nepal has witnessed how terrorists snatch small arms from civilians and turn them brutally against innocent people. Our commitment to implement the Program of Action adopted by the Small Arms Conference in 2001 is full and our call to strengthen the global measures to keep these arms off non-state actors is strong.

While overall progress in disarmament is rather disappointing, what dismays us most is that the Conference on Disarmament could not agree on its program of work in its four successive sessions. The Commission on Disarmament also did not meet in the last session. These are matters of serious disappointment for us. We call on the world community to put these multilateral mechanisms to their best use.

Mr. Chairman,

The regional centres for peace and disarmament are an important tool to promote the goals of disarmament and peace. Nepal is grateful to Member States for the honour they have conferred on Nepal by designating it as host for the regional centre for Asia and the Pacific. I wish to reaffirm the abiding and resolute commitment of His Majesty's Government to transfer the centre where it belongs, at the earliest.

For this, the Government has already decided to contribute the operational cost of the Centre, when it relocates to Kathmandu. We seek your continued moral and material support in relocating the centre to Nepal and strengthening its activities.

Mr. Chairman,

Deadly weapons may bring uneasy stability founded in fear but they would not ensure durable peace erected on the pillars of mutual trust, understanding and interdependence. All strategic doctrines experimented so far, from the balance of power to mutually assured destruction, have failed to offer such peace.

Nepal, therefore, sees no alternative to a culture of peace, where disputes are resolved peacefully before they flare up and where human dignity is valued. Resources released from the deep cuts in military and arms expenditures should find their way to development in order to lift billions of peoples from poverty, illiteracy and disease around the globe. Peace dividend must be a tangible reality, not an abstract notion.

What we need for durable peace and security is more bridges between peoples and nations and not more bombs.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.