

Statement by Mr. Narayan Dev Pant, Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations at the 2007 Substantive Session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission  
(New York, 10 April 2007)

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure to see you presiding over the 2007 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I am confident that with your wisdom and consummate diplomatic skill you will be able to steer the session to a successful conclusion. I also wish to felicitate the other members of the Bureau and the Chairmen of the working groups.

My delegation fully endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the NAM countries.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his enlightening remarks at the opening of the session yesterday.

Mr. Chairman,

It is heartening that the Commission will continue to consider two very significant thematic issues during the current cycle, namely 'Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons', and 'Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms'. My delegation feels that as a deliberative forum, the Commission should strive to build on the spirit that led to consensus last year on the agenda items and utilize the time allocated for the meeting prudently in forging common grounds with a view to generating a momentum towards achieving the shared goals of international peace and security through disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

The existence of nuclear weapons, including other weapons of mass destruction, remains a persistent threat to all humankind. The fact that the world has a stockpile of thousands of tons of highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium, which are enough to produce more than 100,000 nuclear weapons, is a stark reminder that international peace and security is in absolute crisis.

Further, series of setbacks for the multilateral disarmament bodies—from the Conference on Disarmament to the United Nations Disarmament Commission to the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference—are ominous developments. The fact that NPT 2005 review Conference was unable to adopt a final document and that the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document did not contain anything substantive on disarmament and non-

proliferation speaks volumes about the state of affairs in the field of disarmament in general.

Mr. Chairman,

When the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation was signed in 1968, hopes were high that while nuclear-weapon states would gradually cut down on their nuclear arsenals, non-nuclear weapon states would desist from acquiring them. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 review Conference provided an added sense of optimism in the context of promises made by the nuclear-weapon states. But, unfortunately, the commitments made at that time have hardly been translated into tangible actions. It is therefore in the interest of all that the current state of inertia must come to an end.

Mr. Chairman,

As a State Party to NPT, Nepal remains fully convinced that the Treaty provides the fundamental basis for nuclear disarmament while also serving as an important instrument in curbing the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. It has been our principled position that only the total elimination of nuclear weapons will provide the absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. As an interim measure, early initiatives need to be undertaken for the conclusion of universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurance to non-nuclear weapon states.

While we believe that the need to preserve the sanctity of this multilateral Treaty is a precondition to achieve the goal of disarmament and non-proliferation, nuclear-weapon states and those with nuclear capabilities should set the example by acceding to the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

We strongly feel that the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) has to be concluded in earnest, while strengthening the IAEA's safeguards system so as to reinforce the existing verification mechanism for the non-proliferation regime. It has become all the more urgent to prevent terrorists from acquiring the nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The trend of global trade in conventional weapons is equally alarming. Developing countries, many LDCs among them, as the largest consumers, have been suffering from destabilizing accumulation of arms in their territories. This sobering situation needs to be addressed in real earnest.

We believe that one modest way to mitigate the negative effects of the conventional weapons is through the development of practical confidence building measures. Such

measures create congenial atmosphere among the stakeholders to enter into meaningful cooperation in carrying forward the objectives of disarmament at all levels. We share the view that dialogue, transparency and voluntary sharing of information contribute to lessen threats. Likewise, increased interactions as part of CBMs promote a sense of ownership which enhances the chances of success for common initiatives. Lasting success, however, requires that the special needs of the participating countries are given due considerations.

I also wish, in this context, to emphasize the importance of regional initiatives as effective ways to achieve the goals of disarmament by way of consolidating the confidence-building measures at the regional level. In this context, the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America deserve appreciation for the important works they have accomplished in the field of disarmament in their respective regions. We are hoping that the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for the Asia and Pacific will become fully operational from Kathmandu after its proposed relocation from New York as mandated by the General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, we commend the role played by the Commission in developing practical guidelines, as mandated by the General Assembly, to assist Member States in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and hope that the current session will prove a milestone in setting the tone for the upcoming meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and also SSOD IV, which has become long over due, to examine the whole question of disarmament.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.