Statement by India during the thematic debate on

Other Disarmament Measures and International Security

at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, October 2021

Science and Technology is the most important catalyst for economic and social development. Technology-based innovations have transformed our world and have impacted every aspect of human lives- be it food security, energy, education, communication, travel, health or medicine and contribute to the effective achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, we have to be mindful that while emerging technologies offer tremendous benefits, they also pose potential challenges to international peace and security in view of the possibility of their malicious use, including by non-State actors and terrorists. Thus, it is all the more important that Member States keep abreast of the latest S&T developments which have a bearing on international peace and security and to address any potential risks.

2.   India strongly believes that international cooperation in the peaceful uses of science and technology should be promoted through relevant means, including technology transfer, sharing of information and exchange of equipment and materials. At the same time, India is convinced that international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and high technology with military applications be effectively regulated, keeping in mind legitimate defense requirements of all States and non-proliferation concerns.

3.   India's annual resolution on the 'Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament', adopted by consensus, addresses the felt need of States for enhanced international cooperation in the peaceful uses of science and technology. Acknowledging the need to regulate the transfer of technologies for peaceful uses, in accordance with relevant international obligations, to address the risk of proliferation by States or non-State actors, the resolution *inter-alia,* highlights the importance for Member States to continue efforts to apply developments in science and technology for disarmament-related purposes as well as to engage with experts and relevant stakeholders from industry, academia and civil society to effectively address the challenges involved. India is grateful to the Secretary General for submitting the updated report A/76/182, as mandated by the 2020 resolution.

4.   One of the important emerging areas in the field of Science and Technology relates to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). ICT can deliver enormous economic and social benefits for countries, but they can also have a negative impact on international peace and security, especially due to their susceptibility to harmful uses by both State and non-State actors. The race

for cutting-edge technologies, research and development can accentuate strategic competition and also widen the technology divide. This needs the attention of the international community.

5.   States are leveraging the latest ICT technologies to augment contemporary forms of cross-border terrorism. The world is already witnessing the use of cyber tools to compromise State security through, inter alia, attacks on critical national infrastructure and disruption of social harmony through radicalisation. Democratic and open societies have been particularly vulnerable to such cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns. New and emerging technologies, for instance the use of machine learning and big data, have the potential to improve the lethality of such acts, posing a grave threat to international peace and security. The commercialization of these technologies, including in WMDs, necessitates addressing the risk of proliferation of such technologies by States and non-State actors.

6.   We are also witnessing the sophisticated use of information and communications technologies by terrorists around the world to broaden their appeal, spread virulent propaganda, incite hatred and violence, recruit and raise funds. India would like to underscore the need for Member States to address the implications of exploitation of technological and digital innovation for terrorism.

7.   India is committed to promoting an open, accessible, and secure ICT ecosystem, based on mutual trust, confidence and universal values. We reiterate that resilient, diverse, and secure technology supply chains are vital for maintaining a stable and secure ICT environment. We welcome the consensus adoption of the reports of the GGE and OEWG on ICT earlier this year, which has laid a strong foundation to the new OEWG. We hope that the new OEWG would carry forward the positive momentum and provide an inclusive platform to develop a common understanding on addressing the challenges in the realm of ICT security.

8.   Given the relevance and importance of the cross-cutting nature of Science and Technology and its significance to Member States, India believes that this important topic should bring Member States together to collectively address its complex challenges. India seeks the continued support of all Member States towards the adoption of its resolution on the 'Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament' by consensus this year. We would also encourage Member States to co-sponsor this resolution and join us in this collective endeavour to make a meaningful contribution to global peace and security.

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