



INDIA
भारत

Statement by India
High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament (24 February 2026)

Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies & gentlemen,

It is a privilege to address this distinguished High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, Mr President, I congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the Conference. I also deeply appreciate Mongolia, the First Presidency of Conference this year, for its professional and inclusive approach.

Mr President,

This year's High-level Segment takes place in the backdrop of a profoundly uncertain geo-political and security environment.

Long-standing arms-control arrangements remain under tremendous strain. Military expenditures continue to rise. The international order faces growing challenges. Rapid technological advances with potential military applications are reshaping the security landscape, and all together new domains of conflict are emerging.

These developments add multiple layers of complexity to an already difficult security reality and make the quest for effective and durable solutions more demanding.

Mr President, distinguished colleagues,

The recent expiration of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) poses a significant setback for global arms control. India believes that preserving strategic stability, and preventing an arms race, remain vital, more than ever, for global security.

India, as a responsible nuclear weapon State, is committed, as per its nuclear doctrine, to maintaining a credible minimum deterrent, and espouses a posture of "no-first use" and non-use against non-nuclear weapon States.

We also remain committed to the goal of universal, non-discriminatory, and verifiable nuclear disarmament, through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework.

Our resolutions in the General Assembly reflect our commitment to reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines and policies.

India has drawn attention to the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons carrying unacceptable risks of unintentional or accidental use, and has called for immediate and urgent steps, such as de-alerting and de-targeting.

We have also drawn attention to the growing risk of linkages between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and in particular to the fact that terrorists may seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

Without diminishing the priority that it accords to nuclear disarmament, India supports negotiations in the Conference on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), on the basis of CD/ 1299, and the mandate contained therein, which remains the most suitable basis for negotiations.

Mr. President,

Emerging technologies have added a new dimension to the conduct of warfare and military capacity. As these technologies mature and integrate with existing systems, they are re-defining military effectiveness and introducing new forms of advantage, vulnerability, and competition.

India is committed to addressing these challenges, through a UN system-wide assessment of the potential impact of developments in S&T on international security and disarmament, a call which we make through an annual UN General Assembly resolution.

Mr. President,

India believes that emerging technologies can have transformational effects on reducing poverty and improving the lives of our people. This is particularly relevant in the case of developing country like ours. It is, therefore, important to avoid stigmatizing such technologies.

The India–AI Impact Summit 2026, which concluded in New Delhi last week, focused on leveraging AI for practical and impactful applications especially for the Global South. It highlighted AI’s benefits in driving development and inclusion, and underlined the need for democratizing access to AI.

The Summit was anchored in three themes: People, Planet and Progress, which define the core principles for global cooperation on AI. It attracted significant high-level engagement, with over 20 Heads of State and Government, 59 Ministers, more than 100

global AI leaders, CEOs and CXOs, and over 500 leading AI experts from across the world. Over 100 countries were engaged in the work of the Summit, through the Seven Working Groups, reflecting broad global participation, in shaping responsible and inclusive AI.

The New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact which was adopted by the Summit, has been endorsed by 89 countries and international organisations. It reflects a broad-based global consensus on leveraging AI for economic growth and social good.

Mr. President and distinguished colleagues,

In the military domain, India is committed to its responsible use of AI. Human judgement and oversight in the use of AI in the military domain is essential to mitigate risks and to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law.

India has developed a domestic framework for Evaluating Trustworthy AI in the defence sector to address the complex challenges and mitigate risks posed by AI technologies.

This Framework is centred on five key principles, which, include, reliability & robustness, safety & security, and transparency. These principles provide a foundation for further discussions to appropriately regulate AI in the military domain.

India acknowledges that the use of AI in the nuclear command and control raises questions. We have clarified that the decision to use nuclear weapons would be taken by humans.

India is participating constructively and actively in the ongoing negotiations in Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. India believes that the Guiding Principles and the previous reports of the Group articulate a clear and significant normative understanding that emerging technologies, including lethal autonomous weapons systems, remain fully subject to the obligations and restrictions of International Humanitarian Law.

Mr President,

The prominence of Outer Space in every facet of contemporary life has rapidly grown. New actors have emerged. Dual-use space technology and assets are now a reality.

India has vital developmental and security interests in outer space. As a country with a vibrant and dynamic industry, India is currently planning for human space-flight program (Gaganyaan) and national space station (Bhartiya Antariksh Station) in the near future.

It is our view that outer space should remain a realm for cooperation, not conflict.

India supports the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in Outer Space at the Conference. India is also open to the development of universal

and non-discriminatory non-binding norms and measures on transparency and confidence-building, with the understanding that such measures cannot substitute a legally binding instrument, even as they complement it.

Mr President,

In December 2025, India hosted a Conference to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Biological Weapons Convention. The Conference saw participation from more than 80 countries of Global South, with the focus on strengthening biosecurity for Global South.

In his address at the Conference, the External Affairs Minister, Dr S. Jaishankar highlighted that critical gaps in health infrastructure in the Global South, constitute not only developmental challenges, but also shared global security risks.

The Conference demonstrated India's capacities in the biosecurity and public health space, and highlighted the role of Global South in shaping the next 50 years of Convention.

Mr President,

Since 2019, India has hosted an annual three weeklong, fully funded Disarmament and International Security Affairs fellowship to train the future architects of arms control and disarmament agreements.

The 2026 edition of the programme, which brought together the largest cohort thus far, with 40 mid-career and young diplomats, concluded last month. I take this opportunity to thank the PRs of Argentina and Netherlands, as well as the UN ODA Chief in Geneva for addressing the fellows during the fellowship program.

India, in partnership with UN ODA, has also organised the 2nd edition of the Annual Flagship capacity building programme on the UNSCR 1540 and strategic trade controls for Asia-Pacific and African government experts this month, under the Indian technical and economic cooperation, which is a further demonstration of India's contribution to the global non-proliferation architecture.

Mr President, distinguished colleagues,

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate that India accords high importance to the work of the Conference, whose primary vocation of negotiating legally-binding instruments in the area of disarmament and arms control has a particular relevance to managing and resolving conflict.

The Conference remains the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, as mandated by 1st Special Session on Disarmament and continues to have the mandate, membership, credibility, and the rules of procedure to discharge this responsibility.

Though the Conference has been unable to begin substantive negotiations for many years, India continues to highlight the need for constructive dialogue and engagement. We call on all States to demonstrate the required political will by taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

I thank you.
