

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ANUPAM RAY – CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
– THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONES – GENEVA,
January 31, 2023**

I would like to thank UNIDIR for its presentation.

Mr President,

Nuclear weapons pose the gravest danger to humanity.

2. The best assurance against their use or threat of use is their complete elimination. India remains firmly committed to the goal of universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. We have called for a step-by-step process of nuclear disarmament, as also outlined in our Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament submitted to the CD in 2007 (CD/1816).

3. India reiterates its call to undertake the steps outlined in the Working Paper, including negotiation in the CD of a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention, providing for global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination for nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

Mr. President,

4. Pending their elimination, measures to reduce nuclear dangers arising from accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, and increasing restraint on the use of nuclear weapons are pertinent.

5. India has, therefore, called for an agreed multilateral framework that would bring together all states possessing nuclear weapons to discuss measures relating to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and policies.

6. As part of our doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence, India has espoused the policy of “No First Use” against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. We are prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements.

Mr President,

7. The discussion of negative security assurances cannot be limited to the context of a single treaty or confined to nuclear weapon free zones as it cannot do justice to the wide variety of concerns that emanate from the global nature of the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

8. Besides, India does not consider CD as the appropriate forum for the consideration of regional issues.

9. India, however, respects the sovereign choice of non-nuclear weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

10. This principle is consistent with the provisions of SSOD-I and UNDC Guidelines.

11. As a nuclear weapon State, India conveys assurance that it will respect the status of such nuclear-weapon-free-zones.

Thank you.
