

Statement by Ambassador Sujata Mehta,
Permanent Representative of India to the CD, Geneva
on the CD Plenary on June 4, 2013

Mr. President, since it is the first time that my delegation takes the floor in the CD Plenary under your Presidency, allow me first to congratulate the Islamic Republic of Iran on its assuming the stewardship of this forum. Mr. President, given your vast experience in the field of multilateral disarmament affairs, our work in the CD would surely benefit. Please be assured of our full cooperation in the discharge of your important function.

2. We would like to thank you for sharing with us your thoughts today and in our previous plenary, on the CD and on the importance of agreeing a Programme of Work.

3. India's position on the importance of the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum has been reiterated several times and is well known. India's national priorities have been reaffirmed on many occasions.

4. Nuclear disarmament continues to be our highest priority. Without prejudice to this priority, we support negotiations in the CD on an FMCT in accordance with the agreed mandate. We would

like to see the CD return to substantive work on the basis of a consensus Programme of Work. Through such an approach the role of the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum would be upheld and strengthened.

5. Mr. President, the CD and its Rules of Procedure offer Member States the appropriate venue and the confidence to undertake negotiations on subjects that have an impact on national security. We all have security concerns that relate to a variety of developments in and outside the CD. The important point is that the CD's rules of procedure and established practice allow us to protect such interests while advancing shared and agreed multilateral priorities on international agreements which would enhance both international security as well as national security. The CD as a forum enables both aspects to be achieved, in a complementary manner.

6. This is an essential attribute that reinforces the value of the CD and which places an obligation on CD Member-States to act in a manner that would enable the CD to resume substantive work on the basis of a consensus Programme of Work just as we were poised to do in May 2009 on the basis of CD/1864.

7. At the conclusion of India's Presidency earlier this year, I had outlined my delegation's view of the prospects for a Programme of Work which would be in line with the CD's nature as the forum to

negotiate disarmament treaties of universal applicability by consensus. There are developments on the margins of this forum which highlight the need to uphold the CD as the appropriate venue for substantive work on multilateral disarmament issues. To do so, India is ready to pursue substantive work, including negotiations, in accordance with a Programme of Work, agreed on the basis of the Rules of Procedure that continue to guide our work. I thank you, Mr. President.