

Comprehensive Study of the Question of NWFZ in all its aspects

A/RES/79/241

Mandate: *“To prepare a new comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones, aimed at assessing the current status of existing and potential nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as examining options and recommendations towards strengthening existing zones and the possible establishment of new zones, including in the Middle East”*

India believes that Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs) should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. The initiative to establish NWFZs should emanate exclusively from States within the region concerned and be pursued by all the States of that region.

India’s position is consistent with the following provisions contained in the Final Document of SSOD-1, which underlined that:

- a. The establishment of nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZs) on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned constitutes an important disarmament measure.
- b. The process of establishing such zones in different parts of the world should be encouraged with the ultimate objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons.
- c. The States participating in such zones should undertake to comply fully with all the objectives, purposes and principles of the agreements or arrangements establishing the zones, thus ensuring that they are genuinely free from nuclear weapons.

4. India’s position is also consistent with the guidelines and principles on establishment of NWFZs adopted by consensus by the Disarmament Commission in 1999, which stated that:

- a. NWFZs should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned.
- b. The initiative to establish NWFZs should emanate exclusively from the states within the region concerned and be pursued by all states of that region.
- c. All the states of the region should participate in the negotiations and the establishment of such zone on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at amongst the states of the region concerned.

d. The process of establishing the zone should take into account all characteristics of the region concerned.

India reiterates the above-mentioned understandings, agreed by consensus, with regard to NWFZs. India further underlines that it supports the establishment of NWFZs in different regions of the world, provided suitable conditions exist in a particular region and the zone is proposed to be established with the initiative of an agreement amongst the countries in that region. Any proposal for the creation of NWFZs in a particular region has to be considered on its merits.

Further, it must take into account the region's special features and geographical extent. As conditions for the establishment of such zones differ from continent to continent, it is not possible to devise a single formula or to lay down general principles which can cover all such cases.

As a nuclear-weapon State, India respects the sovereign choice of non-nuclear-weapon states to establish NWFZs on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned. India, in general, conveys its unambiguous assurances to respect the existing NWFZs.

It needs to be fully examined whether the proposed study will have value to the conclusions agreed by the UN Member States.

India's position on the NPT is well-known. India underlines that NWFZs possess an independent and a distinct legal identity. Predating the NPT, NWFZs address region-specific security concerns within clearly delineated geographical boundaries.

India, therefore, underscores that the consideration of NWFZs must be considered in a non-discriminatory manner and within an inclusive framework comprising of all states possessing nuclear weapons.
