Statement by Ambassador DB Venkatesh Varma
Permanent Representative of India to the CD
during the First Committee Thematic Debate on
UN Disarmament Machinery,

17 October 2014

Mr. Chairman.

India attaches high importance to the UN disarmament machinery established by SSOD-I consisting of the triad of the First Committee. the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that there is a need to recommit ourselves to the machinery even while considering ways to improve its work efficiency.

India associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with its Charter, the UN has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. The First Committee is the embodiment of the international community's faith in the benefit of multilateral approaches on disarmament and international security issues. It provides member states with diverse perspectives an opportunity to voice their views and acts as a platform for building consensus for collective action on the disarmament agenda.

The UN Disarmament Commission is the only universal forum that provides for in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues for building greater understanding and consensus on issues on the international disarmament agenda. The Commission has produced several important sets of guidelines and recommendations for the General Assembly in the past. This year, the Disarmament Commission, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, made considerable progress in finding common ground on the two items on its agenda and came close to reaching consensus which unfortunately remained elusive. In our view this was more due to lack of requisite political will rather than a deficiency in the institutional mechanism of the Commission. We support efforts to reinvigorate the work of the UNDC for the next triennial cycle.
Mr. Chairman.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament continues to have the mandate, the membership, the credibility and the rules of procedure to discharge its responsibility as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Since the decisions of the CD impact national security, it is logical that it conducts its work and adopts its decisions by consensus.

India remains committed to efforts aimed at the CD reaching consensus on its Programme of Work to commence early substantive work. While we share the disappointment that negotiations have not commenced on the basis of an agreed programme of work, despite efforts of the Informal Working Group established for that purpose. This year the Conference was able to engage in-depth and extensive discussions on all items on its agenda. We also hope that the work of the GGE on FMCT will facilitate the early commencement of negotiations on FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the agreed mandate.

Mr. Chairman.

The membership of various Group of Governmental Experts constituted by the Secretary General has been the subject of some concern in this Committee. We regret that India, a major space faring nation, was excluded from the GGE on TCBMs in Outer Space. Despite having major capabilities in the field and having contributed actively to the GGE on Information and Telecommunications in the context of International Security in previous years. India was dropped from the GGE this year. No convincing reasons have been given for India’s exclusion.

The UN Secretariat, in particular the ODA, has an important responsibility in assisting States in pursuing the multilateral disarmament agenda and should be strengthened. There is also a need to ensure greater coherence between disarmament work in New York and Geneva, such as on small arms and light weapons. It is equally important that the CD Secretariat in Geneva is provided the necessary resources to fulfill its functions.

UNIDIR and the Secretary General’s Advisory Board which find their origins in SSOD-I have an important supporting role. We believe that UNIDIR should be strengthened so that it can fulfill its role of providing in-depth and long term research on disarmament issues, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Secretary General’s Advisory Board should be
representative to enable an inclusive and forward looking approach to global disarmament issues.

Mr. Chairman, we would also like to underline that the UN disarmament machinery cannot be looked at in isolation from the urgent need for revitalization and reform of the UN and its principal organs, the General Assembly and the Security Council, to bring them in line with contemporary realities. India would continue to work towards strengthening multilateralism and UN's role in accordance with its Charter.

Thank you.