Statement by Mr. Ranjan Mathai, Foreign Secretary
at the Conference on Disarmament
June 18, 2013

Mr. President,
Secretary General of the Conference,
Excellencies,

It is an honour to address the Conference on Disarmament. India has been a member of the CD since its inception. We value very much its role as the world community's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. The CD fulfills a unique function by bringing together all the militarily significant states. It is also a forum that brings together all states possessing nuclear weapons. If the CD did not exist there would be a need to invent one, especially if we are to make progress on the path towards global nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons - a priority enshrined by universal consensus in the Final Document of the first Special Session on Disarmament of the UN General Assembly, which in fact established this Conference.

2. The mandate of this Conference is to undertake negotiations on treaties of universal application. India supports the early commencement of substantive work in the CD. The Conference must proceed with the adoption of a Programme of Work. This body works on the principle of consensus and rightly so as matters that come up for negotiation fall in the domain of national security. But the same principle also affords member states the opportunity to protect their interests during negotiations. Therefore, it is unfortunate that this Conference has been prevented, on one unconvincing pretext or another, from commencing substantive work - in the immediate context on an FMCT or for that matter on issues that command strong support from members of this Conference, be it on Nuclear Disarmament,
Negative Security Assurances or on Measures to Prevent the Weaponization of Outer Space. This Conference should be allowed to fulfil its mandate as a negotiation forum by commencing such negotiations on the basis of an early decision on its Programme of Work.

3. India has been consistent in its support for global, non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. We associate ourselves with the statement on Nuclear Disarmament made by Zimbabwe on behalf of the G-21 last week. India's Working Paper tabled as CD 1816 in 2007 contains specific proposals, based on the key principles of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time bound manner. India is convinced that the goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is need for a meaningful dialogue among all states possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. Progressive steps are needed for the de-legitimization of nuclear weapons paving the way for their complete elimination. For over three decades, the UNGA has voted in favour of a resolution, sponsored by India, calling on this Conference to negotiate a Convention on the Prohibition of Use of Nuclear Weapons. As a nuclear weapon state, India has a doctrine of Credible Minimum Nuclear Deterrence underlined by a No-first Use posture. We have also supported a Global No-First Use Treaty.

4. Without prejudice to the priority India attaches to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in the CD of a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that meets India's national security interests. India is a nuclear weapon state and a responsible member of the world community, and would approach these negotiations as such. There is an agreed mandate for the commencement of such negotiations.
We do not favour reopening this mandate. India's support for FMCT negotiations is consistent with our interest in strengthening the global non-proliferation regime; an FMCT would add a measure of strategic predictability and would be a base line for future global nuclear disarmament efforts. Therefore blocking FMCT negotiations for an open ended nuclear build up would be a matter of concern not just for India but for the international community as a whole.

5. India is a major space faring nation with wide ranging interests in Outer Space. Our growing space interests are vital to our national security interests as well. We accord priority to the issue of Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, including the safety of assets in space. The international legal framework on space security needs to be strengthened to enhance the security of space assets for all space users and to ensure the long term sustainability of Outer Space. While universal and non-discriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role, and indeed India is participating in efforts led by, among others, the EU in this regard, they cannot substitute legally binding instruments in this field.

6. India supports international cooperative efforts that strengthen multilateral approaches and institutions in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. For its part India has actively contributed to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda - at the UNGA, the UNDC, and the IAEA and at the OPCW. India has stepped up its engagement with the multilateral export control regimes with a view to membership of those regimes. We support efforts of the UNSC's 1540 Committee, in particular in addressing the challenges of clandestine proliferation. India hosted a 1540 workshop on building new synergies for nuclear security in Delhi in November last year. We contributed to the success of the Nuclear Security Summit, the CCW and BWC Review Conferences last year and the CWC Review Conference in April this year.
7. I am conscious that there is impatience with the current stasis in the CD. Questioning the relevance and authority of established multilateral disarmament frameworks is misplaced when in fact the current impasse is more due to the obstacles placed in its path rather any inherent institutional deficiencies. It is incumbent on all of us to enable the Conference to fulfil its mandate for negotiating multilateral treaties that can be implemented universally. We are convinced that the CD has the membership, the credibility and the rules of procedure to discharge its mandate as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

8. We were privileged to hold the Presidency of the Conference during the first session. In our view, the best way to revitalize this Conference is to allow the commencement of substantive negotiations. In this regard, we hope that our collective efforts will bear fruit in the near future. Mr. President, It has been an honour today to speak during the Presidency of Iran.

Thank you. **