STATEMENT BY MR. AVINASH PANDE, HON’BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION,

ON

AGENDA ITEM 69 “PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS”: (B) “HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS” AND (C) “HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES”

AT

THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE

68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK OCTOBER 30, 2013
Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary General and the Special Rapporteurs for their reports under Agenda item 69 (b) and (c).

Mr. Chairman,

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which reaffirmed the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights.

India attaches great importance to the Right to Development and recognizes development as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process.

While States have the primary responsibility to promote the Right to Development, one cannot disregard the imperative of international cooperation, which is essential for the purpose of creating a supporting environment for the genuine realization of the Right to Development.

We support the efforts of the Working Group to operationalize the Right to Development that would contribute to mainstreaming it in the policies and operational activities of relevant development actors at the national, regional and international level, including multilateral financial, trade and development institutions.

Mr. Chairman,
As we mark the 20th anniversary of Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, we urge all States to redouble their efforts in promoting the right to development, given its centrality in advancing human rights development and peace and security in an increasingly interdependent globalized world, including in the post-2015 development agenda.

As we approach the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, it is gratifying to note the progress made globally. Yet much remains to be done. We firmly believe that a strengthened global partnership is required to ensure the completion of unfinished MDG tasks post-2015.

It is in this context, we wish to recognize the useful work done by the Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Education, and to Health, for their elaboration of these issues in the sustainable development framework.
India places great importance on the adoption of a Post-2015 Development Agenda with a central and overarching goal of eradicating poverty through an inter-governmental negotiation process under the United Nations and in consonance with the outcomes and principles of the Rio+20 Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression in his report has rightly observed that the right to information is one of the rights upon which free and democratic societies depend and that this right is an “enabler” of other rights.

In India, the Right to Information Act 2005 has empowered the ordinary citizens through access to information on government action leading to a more transparent and accountable governance.

Mr. Chairman,

Terrorism remains a grave threat to security and stability everywhere. Terrorists violate the most fundamental human right of their victims - the right to life. They also infringe upon several other basic human rights. Terrorism is an attack on democracy, human dignity, human rights and development.

We need to renew our commitment, especially here at the UN, for concerted, cohesive and continuing global action that ensures zero-tolerance towards terrorism. We need to remove the moral and legal ambiguities that allow terrorists to gain succor and even legitimacy.

There can be no tolerance for States sheltering, arming, training or financing terrorists. Nor can they absolve themselves of the responsibility to prevent their territories from being used to launch acts of terrorism.

Globalization and significant advances in information and communication technology provide a platform for terrorists to operate across continents on a real time basis. This has to be met with a global response.

States have the primary responsibility to protect their citizens. As States strive to align their fight against terrorism with respect for their human rights obligations, it is equally necessary to recognize that victims of terrorism are victims of grave violations of international human rights laws.
We must, therefore, ensure that human rights debate is not misused for undermining global efforts at combatting terrorism in pursuit of narrow political agendas.

Mr. Chairman,

With our democratic, pluralistic and secular polity, an independent and impartial judiciary, a vibrant civil society, a free media and independent national human rights institution, India has been successful in ensuring effective guarantees for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Our vibrant democratic polity also requires that we continuously pursue higher norms and standards, be it in the area of human rights or development. As the world’s largest democracy, India considers it an obligation and a moral imperative to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

It is this approach that guides our work at the United Nations. The primacy of national efforts needs to be recognized in pursuit of our common objective of realizing human rights for all. We firmly believe that promotion and protection of human rights can be best pursued through dialogue and cooperation.

I thank you.