



**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

**Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi at the Plenary Meeting of the
Conference on Disarmament
Agenda Item 6: Briefing on Disarmament aspects of New Agenda for Peace
08 August 2023**

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this meeting. We would also like to thank Ms. Carolyne Mélanie Régimbal, the UNODA Chief in Geneva, for her briefing on disarmament related analysis and recommendations contained in the UN Secretary General's policy brief on New Agenda for Peace.

Mr. President,

The Secretary General's assessment of the global peace and security landscape and the recommendations for a new peace agenda are both timely and essential.

The disarmament piece of the New Peace Agenda does contain some bold proposals on new technologies for military purposes. However, in other important areas particularly those which this body is tasked to address, it lacks ambition.

We agree the arms control system and its machinery are not immune from the negative effects generated by global fragmentation and geopolitical competition.

Therefore, while it is prudent to invest in prevention especially inter-state conflicts, it is equally important to seek their resolution particularly those festering for decades, not just their peaceful management.

At the same time, the resolution of conflicts must be centred on eliminating their root causes, consistent and universal application of the principles of the UN Charter, international law, UN Security Council resolutions and international treaties.

The Secretary General is correct in stating that “Cooperation cannot work without the expectation that States will respect the commitments which they have undertaken.”

We also agree with the Secretary General on the equitable benefits for all from international cooperation and the correlation between international cooperation and trust.

Mr. President

I would now share our perspective on disarmament related dimensions of the policy brief.

Regarding Action 1, we underscore that all forms of use of force must be prohibited in accordance with the foundational principle of the UN Charter i.e. prohibition of the use or threat of use of force; not just the elimination and prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Surely, the world should not be made “safe” for the use of conventional or other new and emerging weapons. It is well known that nuclear use will precede not succeed a conventional conflict.

The call for recommitment to the pursuit of a world free from nuclear weapons should be contextualized. For this worthy vision to materialize, a direct call for fulfilment of legal obligations by the five nuclear weapon states is essential. It is equally important to reinvigorate advocacy for the start of negotiations on a Nuclear Weapon Convention in this Conference, a call supported by majority of states.

The erosion of international norms against the spread of nuclear weapons can effectively be halted when relevant States abide by their treaty obligations and do not pursue policies of discrimination and double standards.

The policy brief seems to bank on commitment of states possessing nuclear weapons not to use them. What is required is to heed the call by a vast majority of states to transform such existing commitments into legal guarantees in this body by commencing long-awaited negotiations on a legal instrument.

Pursuing NSA Convention in the CD remains a low-hanging fruit, which can generate transformational dividends for risk reduction and re-building of the much-needed trust. The CD should therefore be called upon to commence negotiations on NSA Convention without further delay.

The call on Security Council to impose punitive measures against any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is at best a strategy of hope. How will or can the Security Council impose punitive measures if the perpetrator of such action is also a veto-wielding member that will certainly block any Council action in such an eventuality?

Mr. President,

Under Action 7, we agree with the need to reduce the human cost of weapons, reduction in military expenditures and renewed efforts to limit conventional arms. Yet, it is important not to ignore the dangerous impacts and growing threats to peace and security at regional and global levels due to the proliferation and build-up of armaments of all types.

Indeed, the arms control and disarmament system is eroding due to the rising tensions, the accompanying arms race and the growing reliance of states on military means to safeguard national security. Therefore, while the call for addressing the human cost of weapons is appropriate, it would only work in tandem with a simultaneous call for eschewing aggressive policies, doctrines and postures, which escalate risks and exacerbate insecurity.

We once again invite the UN Secretary General to task UNODA to prepare an Annual Report on global and regional military expenditures. This report should also include details of global arms trade as well as military deployments worldwide.

Action 7 should be promoted together with Action 11: to prevent the weaponization of new technologies, cyber and outer space and controls on “lethal autonomous weapons”, Artificial Intelligence and rising biological and chemical weapon threats.

We agree that infrastructure essential for public services and the functioning of society should be declared off-limits to malicious cyber activity. Similarly, there is merit in evolving an independent multilateral accountability mechanism to deter malicious use of cyber space.

These aspirations should however be anchored in the principles, norms and rules that are specific to the unique nature of cyber space. The call for responsible behaviour in cyber space is sensible but not sufficient. An effective normative deterrence is essential against malicious activities.

We fully endorse the call made by the UN Secretary General to conclude by 2026, a legally binding instrument to prohibit lethal autonomous weapon systems that function without human control or oversight, and which cannot be

used in compliance with international humanitarian law, and to regulate all other types of autonomous weapon systems.

The rising biological threats mentioned under Action 11 will be considered by the Working Group on Strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), which has just commenced its work in Geneva. In order to effectively address these threats, all BWC States Parties must grasp this opportunity to revitalize the Convention in a manner that its regulatory, promotional and institutional pillars are strengthened given the existing and future threats and opportunities in the field of life sciences.

At the same time, it is vital that the potentially dual nature of emerging technologies in the life sciences should not be used as a pretext to proscribe or further restrict access and availability to developing countries. Striking a prudent balance between addressing new risks while promoting peaceful uses is critical.

Mr. President,

Preventing a conflict in or originating from outer space remains an urgent imperative. Again, pursuing a responsible approach is necessary but not sufficient. There is a large body of existing international norms, principles and rules that need to be complied with in order to prevent conflict in or from outer space. We endorse the call for launch of negotiations on PAROS as an effective measure to ensure international as well as regional peace and security.

The call for reform of the disarmament machinery needs to be seen in its proper context. The multilateral disarmament machinery remains in a state of paralysis for over two decades. This paralysis is also both a cause and consequence of the competing strategic priorities, the relentless pursuit of maintaining military advantages and pursuit of discriminatory policies by some states. The messianic zeal, arbitrary priorities and self-serving notions of ripeness that disregard the foundational arms control principle of equal security for all have reinforced the machinery's deadlock.

The arms control machinery remains sound in its design, procedures and methods of work. After all, it is the same machinery and same rules and methods of work that it was able to conclude several landmark treaties in the past when fundamental principles were adhered to.

Solutions to overcome the deadlock in the machinery lay within its respective constituents and compliance with fundamental principles of arms control enshrined in international law, the UN Charter and the Final Document of SSOD-1.

We therefore underscore the need for all States to recommit to the universally agreed principles of arms control at SSOD-I i.e. equal security for all states;

national security at the lowest possible levels of armaments, regional military balance and the pursuit of disarmament measures in ways no state or group of states takes undue advantage over others.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by emphasizing that the New Agenda for Peace, while commendable in its intent, is but a starting point—an opportunity to progressively rebuild consensus on arms control and disarmament.

The challenges we face today are multifaceted and they require a renewed commitment and faithful adherence to, universal, consistent application of and respect for international law, based on non-discrimination and centered on the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and SSOD-1.

I thank you.
