



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

**Statement by Ambassador Bilal Ahmad at the Plenary Meeting of the
Conference on Disarmament
12 March 2024**

Agenda Item 2: Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening the Plenary meeting today on Agenda Item 2. We associate ourselves with the G-21 statement delivered by Zimbabwe.

The concept of prevention of nuclear war is grounded in two interconnected streams.

First, nuclear disarmament as a means to achieve the larger objective of preventing a nuclear war.

Second, measures to prevent nuclear war until the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Any work under this agenda item should remain true to these both streams.

This agenda item, which has been under consideration of the Conference since 1983, has seen numerous noteworthy proposals from Member States relating to diverse and pertinent themes, such as,

- Commitments by States to renounce the use or threat of force in accordance with the UN Charter,
- Pursuing policies of restraint,
- Regional security arrangements,
- Military doctrines,
- Confidence-building measures, in particular those aiming at the prevention of the outbreak of war, including nuclear war,

- Military balance, and,
- Reduction of nuclear armaments.

Work in all these areas can contribute to the goal of prevention of nuclear war. Take, for instance, the issue of Military Doctrines, which contemplate preemptive force or limited conventional warfare under a “nuclear overhang”. Do they increase the risks of a nuclear war or diminish it? These are the conversations we should be having under this Agenda Item.

The urgency of making strides under Agenda Item 2 has intensified in the backdrop of ongoing conflicts and normalization of use or threat of force in international relations to settle disputes.

Mr. President,

However, of late, under this Agenda Item, efforts pursued by some CD member states have centered around cost-free and illusory measures, which only distract from our primary objectives of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war.

It remains an objective reality that any nuclear war in the foreseeable future would not be fought with what is yet to be produced, but by what has already been produced, stockpiled, weaponized, deployed or reserved for such purposes.

And this brings me to the issue of Fissile Materials.

Pakistan’s consistent position on a Fissile Material Treaty is well known and remains unchanged, as also laid out in the working paper (CD/2036) submitted in 2015.

We believe that any treaty dealing with fissile materials should be based on following principles:

First, it should provide equal and undiminished security for all States, a principle recognized by SSOD-I.

Second, in addition to a ban on future production, it must also cover the past production of fissile materials, in order to address the asymmetries in fissile material holdings at the regional and global levels.

Third, it should neither discriminate between the different nuclear-weapon states, nor between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear weapon states.

Fourth, it should be free of any loopholes by encompassing all types of fissile materials usable in nuclear weapons including their potential transfers to other States Parties.

Fifth, it should promote both regional and global stability and enhance confidence among all States Parties.

Sixth, it should not affect the inalienable right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under effective safeguards preventing diversion to prohibited purposes.

Lastly, it should be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. A treaty negotiated outside the CD will lack legitimacy and ownership, similar to the pseudo progress sought through the divisive processes like GGEs and High-Level Expert Groups – the reports of which, we continue to reject.

Mr. President,

Any arms control, non-proliferation or disarmament treaty that diminishes the security of any State would be a non-starter. No country can be expected to enter into negotiations on a treaty that would be detrimental to its national security, as was the case when a large group of countries refused to engage with the TPNW negotiations outside the CD and continue to block progress on many issues inside the CD including nuclear disarmament.

These countries did not attempt to sort out their concerns on the negotiating table, as they advise others to do so, when they had clarity about the impact of such measures on their security.

Pakistan believes that a treaty which only results in a cut-off in the production of fissile material, as interpreted under the Shannon Mandate by the nuclear weapons possessors, will not contribute to nuclear disarmament. It will also not realize our larger objective of prevention of nuclear war.

The situation of vast asymmetries in existing stocks in our region has been compounded by the grant of discriminatory waiver by the Nuclear Suppliers Group to one state and the conclusion of several bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreements. By providing this state with an assured supply of nuclear material ostensibly for civilian nuclear cooperation without adequate non-proliferation and safeguards commitments in return, these suppliers have freed up the domestic stockpiles for military use in that

state and contributed to endangering regional strategic stability in South Asia.

Mr. President,

When we look outside our region, among the states that possess nuclear weapons, most have either announced unilateral moratorium on the production of fissile material or attained a level of comfort through continued national production and the conclusion of special arrangements. It was only after amassing fissile material in quantities vastly surpassing any conceivable defense requirement that they embraced the cause of the FMCT with a fervor bordering on obsession.

Unlike Pakistan, FMCT is a completely cost-free exercise for them and an exercise for optics to sell progress cheaply as what they refer to as “next step”.

Also, for the non-nuclear weapon States parties to the NPT, many of which enjoy a nuclear umbrella under extended nuclear deterrence arrangements, an FMCT would not entail any new obligation.

Mr. President,

The disagreements on FMCT and the issue of existing stocks is not simply a language, or a declaration issue as has been often suggested. It is not a matter that can be resolved by leaning on ambiguity of formulations and references. For Pakistan, the question of stockpiles is a direct national security concern.

In conclusion, the time for FMCT that seeks to freeze existing asymmetry in nuclear arsenals and fissile material stocks held by some nuclear weapons States, has long passed. The Shannon Mandate has lost its utility and is no longer valid.

For these reasons, Pakistan will continue to oppose such a discriminatory proposal. We reiterate our call for starting work in earnest towards developing a new basis for negotiations on a treaty whose scope expressly encompasses existing stocks.

In addition, Pakistan also stands ready to work constructively in this body to advance our substantive work under Agenda Item 2 in pursuit of the broader objective of prevention of nuclear war through other themes.

I thank you