



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

**Statement by Ambassador Bilal Ahmad, Permanent Representative, at the
Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament
14 May 2024**

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this plenary meeting. We would also like to thank the panelists for their invaluable contributions today.

Mr. President,

The United Nations recognizes disarmament and development as “two of the international community's most important tools for building a world free from want and fear”.

Disarmament contributes to creating a stable environment conducive to development, while sustainable development reduces the likelihood of conflict and the need for arms.

The intricate relationship between these elements highlights that disarmament and development must be analyzed in tandem with the factors propelling arms accumulation.

Mr. President,

The international community has long invested efforts in understanding the inter-relationship between disarmament and development.

In 1979, the Conference on Disarmament included “Disarmament and development” as one of the items of the Decalogue under which we have been adopting our annual agenda.

In 1984, concerned with the rising global military expenditure, the international community decided to convene an International Conference on disarmament and development. This Conference was held in 1987 in the backdrop of deeply polarizing politics and strategic rivalry of Cold War. The final document of this Conference included an Action Plan with a range of recommendations. These included, inter alia:

- Bilateral, regional and global initiatives for peaceful resolution of conflicts and disputes,
- Continued assessment of political and security requirements and the level of military spending, taking into account the need to keep expenditures at the lowest possible level.

This 1987 Action Plan has largely remained unfulfilled.

Mr. President,

Today the global military expenditures have exceeded the cold war levels reaching \$2.443 trillion in 2023, as per SIPRI. This has been the steepest year-on-year increase since 2009.

The entire UN budget constitutes less than 1% of world's military expenditure. Around 150 times more funds are being spent on fuelling and exacerbating conflicts than preventing or resolving them.

This stark contrast reflects the global priorities and highlights the underinvestment in mechanisms for peace, conflict resolution and development.

This comes at a time when we are witnessing the gravest of crimes being committed and the gravest of violations of the principles of the UN Charter in Gaza. The war in Ukraine also continues unabated.

At a time, when the world needs to come together in strengthening the peacebuilding and development initiatives, some States are financing wars.

Amidst this deteriorating global security landscape, increased emphasis on the relationship between disarmament and development helps in reminding us of what is at stake.

SIPRI has documented that regions experiencing prolonged conflict see a significant portion of their GDP diverted to defense spending, often at the expense of essential social services and economic development initiatives. We also witnessed that during the major wars of 20th Century, when for some European States, the defence spending surpassed 40% of their GDPs.

Mr. President,

In essence, conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts mitigate the root causes of armed conflict. By addressing these underlying issues and investing in these mechanisms, societies can reduce the demand for weapons and military expenditure. This in turn can have a positive impact on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Paris Agreement and other environmental goals.

We can then help create a world, where resources are channeled towards uplifting humanity rather than securing the means for its destruction and where we prioritize sustainable development and peace over the accumulation of arms.

Mr. President,

Since some remarks have been made regarding the situation in the Middle East, I would like to briefly express our position. Pakistan views the recent developments in the Middle East with grave concern. We have continued to underscore that there are grave implications in cases where the UN Security Council is unable to fulfill its responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security.

Pakistan had condemned the attack on the Consular Section of the Iranian Embassy in Damascus, Syria. We consider it a violation of international law and the UN Charter. Attacks against diplomats or diplomatic facilities are also illegal under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961. This happened in the backdrop of an already volatile Middle East.

For months, Pakistan has been underlining the necessity of international efforts to prevent expansion of hostilities in the region and for a ceasefire in Gaza.

Unless there is a ceasefire in Gaza and the ongoing slaughter is prevented, there remains an ever present danger that war and violence may spread and possibly engulf the entire Middle East.

Thank you.
