



Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations and CD in Geneva at the Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons: 77th session of UNGA First Committee, (14October 2022)

Mr. Chairman,

The global arms control landscape today, especially in the nuclear realm, presents a precarious picture normatively, institutionally and operationally. The divisions in approaches, perspectives and priorities are sharpening. The international consensus reached at SSOD-I to systematically pursue nuclear disarmament has virtually broken down.

Nuclear disarmament obligations remain largely unfulfilled as evidenced by constant shifting of goalposts towards additional non-proliferation measures.

The integrity of long-standing principles, norms and rules continues to be eroded by carving out exceptions and pursuit of discriminatory policies. The build-up of arms in the strategic realm is on the rise. Military capabilities are assuming a force multiplier character due to growing weaponization and integration across nuclear, outer space, cyber, conventional and AI domains. Consequently, political and military tensions as well as strategic asymmetries are growing in many regions. Nuclear dangers are rising and the prospects of a nuclear war are “back within the realm of possibility”.

Amidst worsening international and regional security environment, a handful of states seem determined to perpetuate the status quo to their continued strategic advantage.

The impacts of these troubling developments are obvious on the machinery of disarmament.

Many of these troubling trends are manifest in South Asia where the largest State continues to be a net beneficiary of nuclear exceptionalism and discrimination in the application of international norms and legality. It remains a recipient of generous supplies of conventional and non-conventional weaponry, technology and platforms.

The effects of these developments in South Asia are clear; they are eroding strategic stability in the region, abetting hegemonic ambitions of the largest state, aiding its relentless pursuit of strategic domination, aggressive designs, operationalization of its dangerous doctrines and enabling its defiance of international law including UN Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

There are new drivers that are shaping the global and regional strategic environment. Nuclear weapons and their delivery systems no longer exist in isolation. These weapons and platforms co-exist with other advanced weapon systems in different domains.

Therefore, the conversation on nuclear disarmament can no longer be oblivious to the mutually reinforcing relationship of various weapon systems and their collective impact on the security of states, particularly in situations of asymmetry in conventional and nuclear capabilities.

Mr. Chairman,

Given this state of nuclear affairs, the need for rebuilding a more enduring and equitable international security architecture, anchored in the following principles, is obvious:

One, full and consistent respect for the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, UN Security Council resolutions, and international law, especially non-use of force and peaceful resolution of disputes;

Two, implementation of the assurance in the SSOD-I Declaration that: “every state has an equal right to security”;

Three, faithful compliance with and fulfillment of nuclear disarmament obligations by respective states.

Four, reinvigorating pursuit of conventional arms control at regional and sub-regional levels;

Five, eschewing double standards and pursuing non-discriminatory measures in the nuclear and other domains;

Six, commencing negotiations in the CD and concluding a legal instrument on negative security assurances.

Seven, strengthening the existing international legal regime to prevent militarization of outer space, and bringing cyber and autonomous weapons under effective international control.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan remains committed to the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner.

This objective can only be advanced by faithful adherence to and implementation of the cardinal principles enshrined in SSOD-I i.e. the primary responsibility of militarily significant states, pursuit of disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner to ensure that no individual state or group of states obtain advantages over others at any stage, and undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

Towards this end, Pakistan also reiterates its call for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Proposals for Negative Security Assurances (NSAs) have been on the CD's agenda for the longest duration. Pakistan believes that the issue is most ripe for treaty negotiations and has the significant potential to create the necessary environment for confidence building and easing of tensions.

Mr. Chairman,

Treaty proposals that are cost free for the proponents but disregard legitimate security needs of others will remain a non-starter – as is clear from the deadlock over commencement of FMCT negotiations.

The time for FMCT that will freeze existing asymmetry in nuclear arsenals and fissile material stocks held by some nuclear weapons States, has long past. This out-dated proposal does not have any added value for nuclear disarmament either, as is evident from increase in nuclear arsenals by states ostensibly committed to the so-called moratoria on fissile material production.

For these reasons, Pakistan will continue to oppose FMCT.

Pakistan has instead proposed a Fissile Material Treaty that addresses the issues in all dimensions, comprehensively, effectively and verifiably and which explicitly incorporates in its scope fissile material stocks.

During this session, Pakistan will present its traditional draft resolution on Negative Security Assurances, on behalf of a large number of co-sponsoring states. We look forward to its adoption with the widest possible support.

I thank you.