



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

**Statement by Mr. Muhammad Omar, First Secretary,
at the First Meeting of Subsidiary Body 1, Conference on Disarmament, Geneva
15 March 2022**

Mr. Coordinator,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as the Coordinator of Subsidiary Body 1. Given your vast multilateral experience and diplomatic skills, we are confident of reaching substantive outcomes under your guidance.

I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and constructive participation.

We thank you for your letter proposing topics and structure for these meetings. The topics, presented as headings, are relevant to and emanate from the agenda item and in line with the mandate contained in decision CD/2229.

We also thank UNIDIR for the useful presentation.

Mr. Coordinator,

It is very clear from real world developments that build-up of arms in the strategic domain is on the rise. It is also obvious that capabilities are assuming a force multiplier character.

Therefore, in order to realistically capture and analyze the various aspects of arms accumulation and their impacts, an examination of the state of play around nuclear disarmament would be imperative. In addition, a closer look at the state of nuclear arms race also merits attention.

My remarks, today, would revolve around these two themes, in keeping also with the topic of today's meeting i.e. "overview of nuclear disarmament".

Mr. Coordinator,

Nuclear disarmament has remained a top priority of the international community since the advent of nuclear weapons. The very first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in January 1946 inter alia called for nuclear disarmament. This long-standing global priority was accorded its due importance by the CD at its very first session in 1979, when it included nuclear disarmament as its premier agenda item.

The Final Document of SSOD-I established general and complete disarmament under effective international control as the final objective, and recognized the time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons as the immediate goal. SSOD-I agreed by consensus that, in the adoption of disarmament measures, the right of each State to security should be kept in mind, and at each stage of the disarmament process the objective would be undiminished security for all States at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

Mr. Coordinator,

During the past 76 years of the UN and the 43 years of this Conference, the issue of nuclear disarmament continues to be the top priority for the international community. Yet, this global priority has not seen progress at the multilateral level. In fact, over the past several decades it has witnessed regression.

The reasons for this backsliding are quite obvious. At the root is an unwillingness by some states to fulfil their legal obligations and solemn commitments. A handful of states seem determined to perpetuate the unequal status quo to their continued strategic advantage. Unfortunately, lack of adherence by some states to international rule of law in the field of nuclear disarmament presents a major obstacle. This non-compliance with respective legal obligations continues to erode the sanctity of international legality on nuclear disarmament.

It is in this backdrop, then, that we hear self-serving narratives and moves to deflect international attention to other issues. We are told that nuclear disarmament cannot happen, forget about it, and that cost free endeavours such as quantitative capping of fissile material are “the next logical steps”. This approach must be revisited.

Mr. Coordinator

Another fundamental obstacle to progress in this vital area is the refusal by some to distinguish the linkages between nuclear disarmament and the security considerations that drive states to acquire these weapons.

Apart from the failure to live up to legal obligations on nuclear disarmament, there is an additional layer of non-compliance by some states with non-proliferation norms and principles. Some of the same States have violated long-standing rules by carrying out waivers and exceptions in the name of civil nuclear cooperation. This discriminatory application of rules, to advance political and commerce objectives, continues unabated, thereby undermining security of other states that belong to the same region. This nuclear discrimination is also eroding strategic stability as well as hindering progress in the CD.

The fact that some states have been compelled to rely on nuclear weapons as deterrence in the face of asymmetry in conventional capabilities and the resultant threat perceptions, continues to be ignored. This negation clearly undermines the primary objective of the disarmament process – the attainment of equal and undiminished security for all States.

Mr. Coordinator,

On the other end of the spectrum lies the more recent initiative that trivialized legitimate national security concerns of some, if not all, possessor states and was pursued outside the established UN disarmament negotiating platforms. My country did not take part in the negotiations of the Treaty because of these reasons.

While we are aware of the long-standing disappointment over lack of progress in fulfilment of nuclear disarmament obligation, this should detract alternate for legitimate security concerns of States possessing nuclear weapons out of necessity.

Pakistan believes that the goal of nuclear disarmament can only be achieved as a universally agreed undertaking, through a consensus-based process involving all the relevant stakeholders, resulting in equal and undiminished for all States. The eventual objective must be the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a reenergized collective security system.

Mr. Coordinator,

Much as progress in nuclear disarmament continues to be stalled, strategic developments at the global level are increasingly worrisome. Thousands of these weapons and their means of delivery continue to be retained, expanded and modernized.

Apart from qualitative and quantitative increments in the nuclear arsenals, states carrying these activities continue to violate their legal obligations and in doing so undermine the rules-based international nuclear order.

Even more worryingly, these actions are driving risks instead of preventing or halting of the nuclear arms race.

Mr. Coordinator,

The nuclear weapons do not exist in isolation. These weapons co-exist with conventional arms, many with advanced and lethal features. Therefore, the impacts of conventional weapons in tandem with nuclear weapons, on the security of states cannot be ignored in discussions over cessation of nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. The mutually reinforcing aspect of these weapons is another key driver of arms race beyond the nuclear domain, particularly in situations of asymmetry in conventional and nuclear capabilities

Left unaddressed or pursued in isolation, the prospects for ending the nuclear arms race or pursuit of nuclear disarmament would remain a pipe dream only.

Mr. Coordinator,

Several decades ago, the strategic implications of nuclear weapons were tied to their means of delivery. Lethality against a potential adversary was a function of these systems. The age we live in now, with increasing weaponization, integration and operationalization of space and cyber technologies, and hypersonic delivery systems, this lethality and the ensuing risks have multiplied manifold, as have real and heightened dangers for strategic entanglement.

Mr. Coordinator,

This is the larger canvas of cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, under which the substantive work needs to be undertaken. Our pathway can neither be devoid of these realities, or the fundamental underpinnings of disarmament principles.

It would be vital to recognize and address the three key motives that drive States like Pakistan to possess nuclear weapons: one, threats from larger military forces – both nuclear and conventional; two, the existence of disputes with more powerful States; and three, discrimination in the application of international law and norms. These legitimate motivations are different from those States that retain nuclear weapons as a matter of prestige, either to maintain or to attain it.

Therefore, a roadmap that envisages the intersectionality of the dimensions we have highlighted is a must for this Subsidiary Body (SB). We would be presenting it in the next subsidiary body meeting under the topic of fostering understanding on areas of commonality. I take this opportunity to reiterate Pakistan's call for achieving the goal of a nuclear weapons free world that is achieved in a universal, verifiable, time-bound and non-discriminatory manner. As recognized by SSOD-I, the objective of this process should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces. Nuclear disarmament, therefore, needs to be pursued in a comprehensive and holistic manner in accordance with the principles agreed by SSOD-I.

We hope that the discussions in this Subsidiary Body would facilitate the start of negotiations in the CD on nuclear disarmament. We could begin by identifying and examining the various existing proposals on nuclear disarmament, in order to identify the common elements that might provide the initial basis for our work. We need to consider the many proposals already advanced in this body to shape a common approach. We are willing to participate in this endeavour, sincerely and earnestly.

I thank you, Mr. Coordinator.
