



## Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

### **Statement by Pakistan at the Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva 22 May 2019**

Mr. President,

We thank the three distinguished panellists for their thoughtful remarks on issues related to Transparency and Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

At the CD plenary meeting held on 26 March regarding the US initiative on Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND), my delegation outlined seven items that should constitute an integral part of those discussion. One of those related to potential transparency and confidence building measures. We had stated that “Pakistan believes that CBMs and transparency measures should facilitate building of trust between States for them to take meaningful steps towards conflict resolution. Transparency and confidence-building measures could start with small steps which incrementally lead to more concrete agreements on restraint, avoidance of an arms race, and arms limitation.”

Several regions of the world have benefitted from the application of certain principles and guidelines in the area of arms control and evolved appropriate TCBMs. It is important to recall and reiterate some of the relevant core principles agreed by the UN in that regard, which include: one, preservation of balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces; two, the special responsibility of States with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional security; three, undiminished security; and four, pursuit of disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner.

TCBMs have particularly proved their efficacy over the years at regional and sub-regional levels. They also have a positive correlation with international peace and security. As the UN General Assembly resolutions and UN Disarmament Commission Guidelines have affirmed, CBMs at the regional level have to be tailored to the specifics of the region and should begin with simpler arrangements on transparency and risk reduction, enabling the concerned States to eventually pursue more substantive arms control and disarmament measures.

Mutually agreed TCBMs can lead to the creation of favourable conditions; however, they should not become an end in themselves. Over a long term, TCBMs should also contribute towards conflict resolution. However, if with passage of time the conflicts continue to fester then the TCBMs may lose their efficacy.

Although transparency measures can help build trust and confidence but a degree of trust should also exist between States to agree on TCBMs. The real challenge is to find a balance between these two competing considerations. The fundamental prerequisite for TCBMs is the willingness between the States to talk to each other.

Transparency measures also need to be balanced against the need to protect sensitive information that is of military and national security concern as well as the strategic-operational imperative for certain deliberate ambiguity.

Pakistan feels privileged to have spearheaded initiatives on CBMs at the UN for several years now. A practical expression of Pakistan's commitment towards TCBMs is reflected through the resolutions which Pakistan tables every year in the First Committee which includes a resolution on "confidence building measures in the regional and sub-regional context".

Turning to the topic of nuclear disarmament verification. It goes without saying that verification would be an essential and extremely vital element for ensuring compliance with any future agreements on nuclear disarmament. Verification would be indispensable for building confidence regarding both the achievement and the maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

The consensus Final Document of the 1978 first Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Disarmament, SSOD-I states that "Disarmament and arms limitation agreements should provide for adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned in order to create the necessary confidence and ensure that they are being observed by all parties. The form and modalities of the verification to be provided for in any specific agreement depend upon and should be determined by the purposes, scope and nature of the agreement. Agreements should provide for the participation of parties directly or through the United Nations system in the verification process".

The United Nations Disarmament Commission, in 1988, agreed on 16 Principles of Verification, one of which states that "Determinations about the adequacy, effectiveness and acceptability of specific methods and arrangements intended to verify compliance with the provisions of an arms limitation and disarmament agreement can only be made within the context of that agreement".

Mr. President,

Nuclear disarmament verification can be best addressed in the context of a specific treaty regime, and not in an abstract manner, nor as an end in itself. Verification has to be rooted in specific treaties.

Nonetheless, we see value in the conceptual exploration of this issue in a representative body that includes all the relevant stakeholders. Whilst the most suitable forum for this work remains the Conference on Disarmament, the 25-member Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to UNGA resolution 71/67 made a substantive contribution to the topic. It was the first effort of its kind within the UN framework that was mandated to specifically consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. It contributed towards understanding the challenges associated with nuclear disarmament verification, and in identifying certain principles that should govern that work.

The conclusions reached by the GGE in its consensus report acknowledged, inter alia, that “the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament will be determined on a case-by-case basis in the context of the negotiations of legally-binding agreements in the area of nuclear disarmament”. A Pakistani expert participated actively in the GGE and made substantive contributions to its work. We were pleased with the consensus adoption of the GGE’s substantive report and appreciate the able leadership provided by Norway.

Mr. President,

Lastly, while we believe that Transparency, CBMs and a shared conceptual understanding of nuclear disarmament verification can contribute towards building confidence and laying the foundation for nuclear disarmament, they should not be seen as a precondition for the commencement of substantive work on this issue in the CD in accordance with the SSOD-I Final Document.

I thank you, Mr. President.

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