



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

**Statement by Ambassador Bilal Ahmad, Permanent Representative of  
Pakistan, at the Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament,  
Geneva  
23 January 2024  
General Statement**

**Mr. President,**

We welcome your engagement with members of this body.

We thank the CD Secretariat for its invaluable support.

In line with the general format of today's meeting, let me share Pakistan's perspective of the contemporary global security landscape and how this Conference could organize its work this year.

**Mr. President,**

We meet today amidst a global security landscape marred by chaos and uncertainty, vividly demonstrated by devastating conflicts, the heart-wrenching plight of thousands buried under the rubble, and an alarming surge in unprovoked acts of aggression.

As old conflicts continue to fester, new ones emerge due to the failure to uphold the UN Charter principles.

The current disintegration of the international security order compels us to reflect on how we arrived at this critical juncture and whether it could have been averted.

We have been drawing attention to some of the following worrying trends for a while:

- rising geopolitical tensions and great power rivalry,
- increase in military expenditures at unprecedented levels,

- widening strategic asymmetries,
- aggressive conventional warfighting doctrines with dangers of nuclear escalation,
- disregard of principles, norms and rules underpinning the UN charter and the arms control architecture for strategic and commercial reasons,
- and, a relentless race to develop, modernize, and deploy a diverse array of weapons across land, sea, outer space, and cyberspace.

When we scan the global arms control landscape, we see sharpening divisions in approaches, perspectives and priorities. The international consensus reached at SSOD-I to systematically pursue disarmament has weakened. Key arms control agreements have been discarded and the prospects of forging new agreements appear bleak.

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

**Mr. President,**

Amidst these global trends, South Asia remains deeply affected by threats to peace and security. The largest state in the region continues its repression of the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, blatantly defying multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

Strategic stability is also threatened by this state as it continues to receive abundant supply of weaponry, and new sensitive technologies and platforms from actors outside the region. Meanwhile, this state continues to pursue belligerent policies, aggressive war-fighting doctrines, and heightened readiness postures and deployments, fraught with demonstrated risks of accidental launches.

Despite continuing provocations and threats, Pakistan remains committed to the goal of a peaceful and stable South Asia. Pakistan's proposal on the establishment of a Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR) in the region, premised on the three elements of conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint and conventional arms balance, remains on the table.

**Mr. President,**

The region of Middle East is up in flames as a result of brutal onslaught against the hapless Palestinian people. We are horrified to see the images coming out of Gaza, where the international community is failing abjectly in protection of Palestinians civilians. We reiterate our call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire; lifting of the inhumane siege; and expeditious delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

The key to de-escalation in the region lies in stopping the bloodshed in Gaza. Pakistan firmly believes that a durable and just solution to the Palestinian question is the creation of an independent, viable, sovereign and contiguous Palestinian State along the pre-June 1967 borders with Al-Quds-Al-Sharif as its capital.

**Mr. President,**

The impacts of deteriorating security order are palpable on the machinery of disarmament, particularly on this body.

Pakistan considers CD a vital organ of the international security architecture and an indispensable part of the UN disarmament machinery.

Despite longstanding impasse, the Conference must be preserved and enabled to address pressing contemporary security issues. Past approaches that disregard external policies and actions have proven ineffective, and are unlikely to yield success in the future.

The repeated invocation of "ripeness" and arbitrary priorities are tactics to obstruct negotiations on key agenda items, particularly nuclear disarmament.

Also, criticisms of the CD's procedures do not withstand scrutiny, as these very methods have facilitated the successful negotiation of several significant treaties.

**Mr. President,**

The breakthrough in 2022 to establish five subsidiary bodies, through a balanced and comprehensive approach, demonstrated the potential for progress within the Conference. Unfortunately, geopolitical tensions prevented a repeat of this success in the subsequent year. Nevertheless, the efficacy of the 2022 model remains unchallenged.

While by no means a substitute for the CD's true mandate i.e. negotiations on disarmament, the 2022 decision stands out as the most practical least common denominator, particularly in the absence of a more conducive environment, and an agreed mechanism to address the vital national security interests of States.

**Mr. President,**

Pakistan remains committed to the goal of a nuclear weapons free world that is achieved in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner. This objective can best 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 a 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, without further delay.

Pakistan also supports the immediate start of negotiations in the CD on a Convention on legally binding Negative Security Assurances (NSAs) and a Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT).

Proposals for Negative Security Assurances (NSAs) have been on the CD's agenda for the longest duration. Pakistan believes that the issue is the lowest hanging fruit in this body and has the significant potential to create the necessary environment for confidence building and easing of tensions. To this end, we have presented a detailed working paper last year on a legally binding instrument on NSAs as contained in CD/2317.

**Mr. President,**

Even as we grapple with previous and present tools and methods of war, we brace ourselves for the ongoing technological wave that aims to multiply military force and capabilities at an unprecedented scale.

Today, nuclear weapons and their delivery systems no longer exist in isolation. Instead, they co-exist with other advanced weapon systems in different domains. Coupled with new breakthrough technologies, the risks of miscalculation and escalation have greatly amplified.

The global discourse over Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its implications for security are no longer confined to the realm of science fiction. AI's inevitable progression from algorithms to armaments is gaining momentum without adequate guardrails governing its design, development, and deployment.

The window of opportunity to act is rapidly diminishing as we prepare for a technological breakout on the battlefield. Pakistan has accordingly presented a working paper last year in the CD, contained in CD/2334. We invite everyone to examine these proposals and join in efforts to develop the normative guardrails.

Should there be consensus, Pakistan also stands ready to join substantive work on other contemporary issues such as chemical and biological terrorism, weaponization of cyber space, radiological weapons, and other types of destabilizing weapon systems, including delivery systems.

**Mr. President,**

The proposal for a treaty banning only the production of fissile materials remains flawed and is outdated. Such a treaty seeks to perpetuate existing asymmetries by excluding from its scope several metric tonnes of existing fissile material stocks that can produce thousands of new nuclear weapons.

Such asymmetries in South Asia are being further accentuated by generous external support and supplies. Proposals that are cost free for the proponents but disregard the legitimate security needs of others will remain a non-starter.

For these reasons, Pakistan will continue to oppose such a discriminatory proposal.

Pakistan has instead made a concrete proposal in the CD on a Fissile Materials Treaty that genuinely promotes the twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation equitably.

**Mr. President,**

Finally, the CD should resume substantive work on all its agenda items in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

Therefore, unless some members withdraw their opposition to commencement of negotiations on NSAs, PAROS, nuclear disarmament or military applications of AI, the 2022 approach to conduct substantive work remains the most realistic option.

My delegation will continue to engage with you and other members of the CD to explore the possibilities of fulfilling its mandate.

**I thank you.**