



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

**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Hina Rabbani Khar, Minister of State for Foreign
Affairs, Pakistan
at the High Level Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva
2 March 2023**

Madam President,

I congratulate Ethiopia on assuming the Presidency of this important Conference.

I also commend Egypt for its skillful leadership and professionalism during the preceding Presidency.

Madam President,

The global security order today is in a state of disarray.

The normative glue that gave it a sense of stability is unravelling. The institutions are under stress.

Strategic stability is eroding due to growing asymmetries in various regions.

Meanwhile, new geo-political alignments seek to perpetuate strategic advantages of the few.

Political and commercial considerations override long-standing non-proliferation rules.

Military expenditures are reaching new heights. Arms races are evident across multiple domains.

Efforts are in full swing to develop and deploy new technologies and weapon systems, militarizing the outer and cyber spaces.

There is clear resistance by leading technology holders to limit or regulate new and lethal tools of modern warfare.

The UN Secretary General has rightly warned that the prospects of a nuclear war are “back within the realm of possibility”.

This unique body cannot remain immune to these drivers and developments. This Conference is thus obliged to operate in this environment.

Yet, it must find ways to address the existing and emerging risks to security and stability at the international and regional levels.

Madam President,

Many of these troubling trends are on display in the South Asia region, exerting severe strains on strategic stability.

The largest country in the region continues to be a beneficiary of nuclear exceptionalism, in violation of established non-proliferation norms and principles.

This country also remains a net recipient of generous supplies of advanced conventional and non-conventional weapons, technologies and platforms.

Make no mistake. These supplies have accentuated military asymmetries and therefore directly impact our national security.

They are straining the security environment; heightening risks to peace and stability in the region; reinforcing a sense of impunity in the recipient state and freezing pathways to conflict resolution through peaceful means.

Even as we adhere to and call for restraint and responsibility, we cannot ignore threats to our security.

Meanwhile, a third of humanity that lives in South Asia deserves investments in sustainable peace and development.

We have a clear vision and a policy for peaceful neighbourhood on the basis of universally agreed principles; sovereign equality and undiminished security for all States; no threat or use of force and pacific settlement of disputes.

We will pursue the path of peace, development and strategic stability in South Asia and beyond, I can assure you of that.

Madam President,

Pakistan attaches high importance to the Conference on Disarmament. In fact, we deem it an indispensable part of the global security architecture and the machinery of disarmament.

The decades long impasse in this Conference is a shared concern. This body in terms of its rules and methods of work remains sound. After all, this Conference has produced several landmark treaties with the same rules and methods.

Therefore, we must ask ourselves why this body is unable to deliver on its mandate. To us, the reasons are rather obvious.

This body has been prevented for decades to commence negotiations on nuclear disarmament. For decades, this Conference has not been allowed to negotiate a Convention codifying Negative Security Assurances. For several decades, this body has been stalled to negotiate a treaty that prevents an arms race in outer space.

Let us be clear. The ability of this Conference to start negotiations on its agenda items remains contingent on the policy priorities of its members, their threat perceptions and their core national security concerns.

It is perhaps disingenuous when some members of the Conference choose to insist on pursuing self-serving and cost free proposals such as banning the future production of fissile materials.

We are not averse to conversations on fissile materials. What we ask is to discuss this subject in all its dimensions. We have therefore proposed a Fissile Material Treaty that addresses this subject comprehensively, effectively and verifiably.

We call for crafting a new mandate for such a treaty. It should stipulate explicitly in its scope fissile material stocks. And it should apply equally to all States without discrimination.

Madam President,

Let me share Pakistan's perspective on how the CD can and should discharge its responsibilities.

First, this Conference must contribute to and promote security at international and regional levels, with a realistic lens towards the drivers and developments I have outlined.

Second, the Conference must play its role in creating conditions that are responsive to the cardinal principle of inalienable right to equal security by all States.

Third, the Conference must adhere to the cardinal principle of arms control i.e. disarmament measures should be pursued in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure that no individual State or group of States obtains advantages over others at any stage.

Fourth, the CD members must demonstrate adherence to international rule of law by refraining from grant of special exemptions and by fulfilling their longstanding disarmament obligations.

All States especially those with the largest military arsenals have a special responsibility to demonstrate political will to enable this Conference to deliver on its mandate.

And Finally, it is in our collective interest to nurture and preserve this Conference. It must be enabled to overcome its decades long impasse by patient and constructive engagement.

Madam President,

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

I wish to reiterate Pakistan's proposal for a renewed paradigm for arms control, away from arms races and towards restraint at the global and regional levels.

A pre-requisite for such a direction is to restore trust, both inside and outside this Conference.

Commencing negotiations on an international instrument on negative security assurances can help transform the global security environment, revive trust and serve as a solid gateway to nuclear disarmament.

In these endeavors, you will find Pakistan a willing and constructive partner.

I thank you for your time.