



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

**Statement by Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative, at
the Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva
07 February 2023**

Thank you Mr. President.

Let me begin by extending Pakistan's heartfelt condolences to the brotherly people of Türkiye and Syria.

Pakistan stands in complete solidarity with the brotherly people of Türkiye and Syria in hour of grief and stands ready to extend all possible support in the relief efforts.

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening today's plenary meeting. We appreciate the outreach and consultations you have undertaken, in a transparent manner, including with the regional groups.

We also thank you for providing the members with an opportunity to reflect on the possible elements for a Programme of Work of the Conference for 2023.

Before delving into these possible elements, I wish to underline some key considerations that remain central to our deliberations.

Mr. President,

As you would recall from the past two weeks, almost all members of the Conference have drawn attention to the complex international security landscape and its attendant challenges, risks and dangers.

Rather than inaction, the situation adds to the urgency for this body to do its part and play its due role in charting an agreed pathway i.e. effective measures to mitigate these dangers at the global and regional levels.

For the Conference to do so, however, three fundamental ingredients must remain at the forefront.

Mr. President,

Many members have reminded us that the Conference does not operate in a vacuum. We agree with this assessment. Our endeavours, therefore, should also fully take into account the contemporary realities of international security landscape in all its dimensions. It is only then that the CD can actually shoulder its responsibility to respond to them. This would be the first ingredient.

The second would be pursuit of genuine multilateralism. This would entail advancing the notion of security that is responsive to the interest of all states, fully taking into account the legitimate security concerns of each and every member i.e. by truly practicing the principle of undiminished and equal security for all.

Third is the continuing importance of adopting a balanced and comprehensive programme of work as a means and a basis towards fulfilment of this body's mandate.

I wish to note that in their remarks over the past two weeks many members, including the Group of 21, have underscored the imperative of a comprehensive and balanced approach to our work at the CD.

Mr. President,

My delegation has clearly articulated its views in our previous statement on what and as to how the CD should proceed.

The reality, as also attested to by the Conference records, is that there is currently no consensus to commence negotiations on any agenda item. We have also increasingly witnessed disagreements impacting the process and procedure of conducting our work.

There is no evidence to suggest that these difficulties are attributable to the CD's rules of procedure or methods of its work. They do, however, remain a function of the policies, actions and developments pursued by its members, both inside and outside these conference halls.

While the CD must contend with the reverberations of these realities, it certainly does not mean that the Conference shouldn't undertake any work. Quite the contrary, it should first start with the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work.

Mr. President,

In our view, the CD has and should continue to resume substantive work on all its agenda items. Despite its list of disagreements over the years, the Conference has agreed to conduct substantive work.

In doing so, we must take into account what has worked, what has not and also recognize what the needs of today are. It is equally important to avoid the pitfalls of arbitrary or subjective approaches.

Given the well known positions of many delegations, therefore, a comprehensive, balanced, objective and equal approach to each agenda item remains fundamental and must be reflected in the PoW.

And it is in this spirit that my delegation considers last year's decision as the most practical least common denominator to build on.

Mr. President,

We also share the perspective of members that the ultimate objective of substantive work at the Conference should be to develop and reach understandings that can eventually pave the way for negotiations, especially with a view to fulfilling this body's *raison d'être* and that is nuclear disarmament.

I, therefore, wish to take this opportunity to echo the call made by many members over the past two weeks, as well as today, regarding the salience and significance of Negative Security Assurances as the first step on this pathway. We also support the proposal of establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on NSAs as the most practical step forward to enable this body in fulfilling its mandate.

Our discussions on NSAs, last year, revealed that there is no fundamental obstacle to or insurmountable difficulty in pursuing outcome oriented work in this crucial area. Neither have we heard from any member as to how meaningful progress in this area, leading to formalization of NSA commitments into a legally binding instrument, undermines the core national security interests of any state.

Mr. President, an objective assessment makes it abundantly clear that of the topic of NSAs is beyond over ripe and should certainly be considered as an option. We are cognizant that achieving consensus on the outcomes would not be an easy task and would entail intensive efforts.

Yet, as a low hanging fruit, it represents the most realistic option for progress at this body and at the same time an opportunity to tangibly respond to the increasing dangers of the complex international security situation.

Similarly, we see PAROS as a longstanding priority of the Conference, on which an extensive amount of work has been undertaken in this body and merits further consideration.

My delegation will continue to engage with you, **Mr. President**, and other members of this body in a constructive and pragmatic spirit to resume substantive work on all agenda items in a comprehensive and balanced manner. We also stand ready, where agreeable to all, to pursue work on new and emerging issues.

As we endeavour to find an agreement, under your able guidance, I would reiterate the significance of realism and respect for the fundamental principle of undiminished security for all.

I thank you.