27th Session of the Working Group on the Right to Development

National statement by Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, Counsellor, during Item 4.4.2: The rights to development, to peace and disarmament

(Geneva, 19 May 2026)

Mr. Chair-Rapporteur,

Pakistan thanks the panelists for their insights on the indivisible link between the right to development and the right to peace. International arms control and disarmament efforts have an important role to play, because there can be no sustainable development without peace and no lasting peace without the full realisation of all human rights, including the right to development. My delegation has four points in this regard:

Firstly, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force are cardinal pillars of the UN Charter and international law, as noted also by the panellists.

As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2025-26 term, Pakistan presented Resolution 2788 (2025), calling on all member states to prioritise preventive diplomacy, mediation, and dialogue to resolve disputes before they escalate towards conflict. Without peaceful settlement, all human rights including the right to development would remain a distant promise for populations trapped in conflict. War-torn societies cannot grow economies, build schools, or ensure healthcare.

The right to development, like all human rights, requires the right to peace.

Secondly, conflict prevention is the most effective path to protecting all human rights including the right to development.

Pakistan has consistently called for addressing the root causes of conflict including, among others, poverty, underdevelopment, and the denial of fundamental rights. Sustainable peace cannot be built on empty stomachs or shattered infrastructure.

Equitable development, justice, and respect for human rights are indispensable for breaking the cycle of violence.

Thirdly, self-determination is a precondition for development, peace and all human rights. This is especially acute for peoples under occupation. Their resources are plundered, their infrastructure destroyed, and their basic rights violated – all illegally by illegal foreign occupiers.

Prolonged occupation is a persistent trigger for renewed conflict, not a pathway to stability. Ending all occupations is therefore not merely a political demand; it is a human rights imperative.

Fourthly, the right to development cannot be fully realized while resources are diverted to wasteful arms races.

The resources squandered on arms buildup could instead be invested in education, healthcare, and poverty eradication. Today, this message is more urgent than ever. Driven by intensifying mistrust, rivalries and conflict, global military expenditures have reached record levels, climbing to $2.9 trillion in 2025.

The allocation of vast financial and technical resources to armaments represents a fundamental imbalance in priorities despite widespread poverty, deep-seated inequalities, and climate change. The opportunity cost of these expenditures is colossal: redirected, even a fraction of global military spending could close the financing gap for meeting many SDG targets and tangibly realizing human rights.

In sum, Mr. Chair-Rapporteur, the rights to development, to peace and to self-determination are not separate from the goals of lasting peace and sustainable development, but mutually reinforcing pillars of the same edifice.

Building a genuine culture of peace therefore requires not only the absence of war, but the presence of justice, development, and respect for self-determination. The cycles of militarization and pursuit of security and hegemony must be broken.

Pakistan has traditionally presented resolutions at the General Assembly on regional disarmament, conventional arms control, and negative security assurances, which advance the objectives of peace and stability, particularly in regions beset with longstanding disputes and tensions.

We must reimagine our collective approach to security, placing the well-being of individuals and communities at the centre, consistent with the right to development.

Thank you, Mr. Chair-Rapporteur.

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