Statement

by

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Permanent Representative of Pakistan
to the United Nations, Geneva

at the

First Committee Thematic Debate on Disarmament Machinery

(69th Session of the UNGA)

New York, 16 October 2014
Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan shares the concerns of other States over the lack of progress in the UN’s entire disarmament machinery. In our view, this deadlock is the result of existing strategic realities. We must recognize that progress by the disarmament machinery requires upholding the principle of equal and undiminished security for all states. There can also be no discrimination, selectivity or exceptionalism in the context of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

It is regrettable that one of the key components of this machinery, the Conference on Disarmament, the CD, has been deadlocked for more than a decade on all issues on its agenda.

Indeed, on the issue of nuclear disarmament, the raison d’etre of the CD, there has been no progress over the past thirty years. Some of the major nuclear weapon states, despite their claims of supporting the goal of nuclear disarmament, have paid only lip service to this goal. In the CD, they have consistently opposed the start of any negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Their argument is that this objective can only be achieved through a step by step approach. However, in our view, such a step by step approach does not really contribute towards nuclear disarmament as it envisages only agreements that amount to non-proliferation measures.

For instance, one such step, the CTBT, does not contribute to nuclear disarmament but only prevents further nuclear tests. And let us not forget that the major nuclear weapons states were only ready to negotiate and conclude this treaty after having conducted more than a thousand nuclear tests and really did not require any further nuclear testing. They have made a virtue out of necessity.

Similarly, some major nuclear weapons states and their allies are now promoting negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty or FMCT, arguing that this is the only ripe issue on the CD’s agenda. Since these major powers already possess huge stockpiles of fissile materials and therefore do not require any more fissile material for weapons purposes, they are ready to make this “sacrifice”. However, such a ban on future production only would be a non-proliferation measure at best with no contribution whatsoever towards the goal of nuclear disarmament.

In our view, for a meaningful non-proliferation and disarmament measure relating to fissile materials, there ought to be a Fissile Material Treaty which not
only bans future production but also reduces or at least puts under international safeguards the existing stockpiles of fissile materials. Only such an FMT can address and protect the security interests of all states and contribute towards nuclear disarmament.

Some states have asserted that national security concerns can and should be addressed during the negotiations in the CD on an FMCT. We could not agree more as long as these States apply the same logic to the other three core issues on the CD’s agenda – nuclear disarmament; Negative Security Assurances and Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

Mr. Chairman,

If there is any issue on the CD’s agenda that is actually ripe for negotiations then it is a treaty on Negative Security Assurances. Such a treaty would not threaten or undermine the security of any nuclear weapons state. At the same time, no nuclear weapon state can take the morally reprehensible step of using nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapon state. Moreover, virtually every nuclear weapons state has in some form or another already extended an assurance against the use of its nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapon state. In these circumstances, there seems to be no logical justification or security compulsion that prevents negotiations and conclusion of a treaty banning the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. Pakistan, as a nuclear weapon state, has already given such an assurance and is ready to conclude such a treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Outer Space is the common heritage of all humanity. It is a zone that should be used only for the benefit of all nations. Accordingly, it becomes incumbent on the international community and the members of the Conference on Disarmament in particular to negotiate a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We welcome and support the draft treaty proposed by Russia on “No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space” and have consistently advocated the beginning of negotiations on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in the CD.

Mr. Chairman,

It is a matter of some satisfaction that after several years of stalemate, the CD did succeed in 2014 to agree on a schedule of activities involving substantive discussions on all its agenda items in a balanced and equitable manner. While not amounting to negotiations or pre-negotiations, these discussions, in our
view, proved useful in highlighting the various aspects of each of the agenda items and to further strengthen our conviction that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate venue to hold such discussions.

My delegation participated actively in these discussions and made several substantive contributions including on the issue of fissile materials. In this context we put forward concrete ideas on how the issue of fissile materials stocks could be addressed in a manner that would address the security concerns of all states while at the same time making a significant contribution to the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan would also like to see more progress in the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) which has not been able to agree on any document for the last fifteen years. Similarly, in the First Committee it has become common place to adopt numerous resolutions every year without any serious effort to implement them. A serious political commitment is necessary to do so.

The lack of progress by the UN Disarmament Machinery is not due to procedure but substance. It is incumbent on all member states and in particular the major powers, to demonstrate the necessary political will as well as a commitment to respect the security concerns of all states, in order for us to make progress and unblock the UN disarmament machinery. Pakistan stands ready to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.