



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

**Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador Zaman Medi at  
the Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament**

**13 June 2023**

*(Panel Discussion on Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters)*

**Madam President,**

Thank you for convening the Plenary meeting today on Agenda Item 2.

We would also like to thank the panelists for their presentations.

**Madam President,**

The notion of prevention of nuclear war is grounded in two interconnected streams. The first one is nuclear disarmament as a means to achieve the larger objective of preventing a nuclear war. The second aspect is, measures to prevent nuclear war until the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Our work under this agenda item should remain true to these both themes.

The SSOD I declared by consensus that “all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, should consider as soon as possible various proposals designed to secure the avoidance of the use of nuclear weapons, the prevention of nuclear war and related objectives, where possible through international agreement, and thereby ensure that the survival of mankind is not endangered.”

Following SSOD I, several UN General Assembly resolutions requested that the CD commence negotiations on the prevention of nuclear war, and the question was put on the agenda of the Conference in 1983, as part of what is now agenda item 1. Since 1984, the issue of “prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters” has featured as a standalone agenda item in this body.

In 1984, this splitting it into two agenda items was in response to calls to urgently address the threat of nuclear war.

A number of interesting proposals were put forward by Member States. For instance, Australia, Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and Netherlands in Document CD/411 proposed a list of sub-items that should be considered under this Agenda Item. Some of these sub-items included:

- Commitments by States to renounce the use or threat of force in accordance with the UN Charter,
- Obligation for all States to maintain a policy of restraint,
- Military doctrines,
- Regional security arrangements,
- Confidence-building measures, in particular those aiming at the prevention of the outbreak of war, including nuclear war, by surprise, accident or miscalculation,
- Significance of military balance, stability and undiminished security of all States, and,
- Significance of effective, negotiated, and verifiable reductions of nuclear armament.

**Madam President,**

The salience of making progress on prevention of nuclear war has only increased today. Last year, the UN Secretary General noted, “the prospect of nuclear conflict, once unthinkable, is now back within the realm of possibility”. In this backdrop, it is essential to take concrete steps that reduce the risks of a nuclear war and make progress under this agenda item.

The increasing strategic risks are attributable to the rise in geopolitical tensions, growing strategic asymmetries, the pursuit of absolute security and domination by powerful states, the rise in global military expenditures, unresolved disputes and the ongoing modernization programmes of conventional and non-conventional weaponry.

The therapeutics of the problem call for addressing the root cause than to manage the optics. Efforts to morph our work into cost free measures and illusory pursuits would only detract us from the larger goals of nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear war.

In order to make progress, under this agenda item, following considerations merit our attention:

**First**, it is paramount that this agenda item is pursued in line with its true intent and we discard proposals that aim to limit the agenda item to peripheral considerations and non-proliferation measures alone.

**Second**, the strategic considerations must revert to the fundamentals i.e. addressing security concerns and threat perceptions – covering traditional military, including nuclear as well as non-nuclear, and non-military threats. And deal with

regional asymmetries and destabilizing arms build-ups both in the strategic and conventional realms.

**Third**, reaffirm the effective universal application of the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations to reduce the danger of war, in particular nuclear war.

**Fourth**, promote commitment to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict resolution and addressing longstanding disputes to prevent development of situations that could lead to dangerous exacerbation in relations of states.

**Fifth**, examine the nature of security doctrines, both offensive and defensive, and their role in strategic stability. Military doctrines that envisage the preemptory use of force; the preemptive use of nuclear weapons; the resort to surprise attacks against other States; fighting a limited conventional war under the “nuclear overhang” must be renounced.

**Madam President,**

Certainly, considerations of preventing a nuclear war cannot be devoid of nuclear weapons and their associated components. It remains an objective reality that any nuclear war in the foreseeable future would not be fought with what is yet to be produced, but by what has already been produced, stockpiled, weaponized, deployed or reserved for such purposes.

And this brings me to the issue of Fissile Materials.

Pakistan’s consistent position on a Fissile Material Treaty, or FMT, is well known and remains unchanged. Our detailed views on various aspects of such a Treaty are also contained in the working paper (CD/2036) submitted in 2015.

It is based on the following overarching principles:

*First*, the treaty should provide equal and undiminished security for all States, a principle recognized by SSOD-I.

*Second*, the treaty should contribute both to the objectives of nuclear disarmament as well as non-proliferation in all its aspects.

*Third*, in addition to a ban on future production, the treaty must also cover the past production of fissile materials, in order to address the asymmetries in fissile material holdings at the regional and global levels.

*Fourth*, the treaty should neither discriminate between the different nuclear-weapon states, nor between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear weapon states. All States Parties should assume equal obligations without any preferential treatment for any category of States.

*Fifth*, the treaty should be free of any loopholes by encompassing all types of fissile materials usable in nuclear weapons including their potential transfers to other States Parties.

*Sixth*, the treaty should include a robust verification mechanism implemented by a representative and independent body under adequate oversight of States parties.

*Seventh*, the treaty should promote both regional and global stability and enhance confidence among all States Parties.

*Eighth*, the treaty should not affect the inalienable right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under effective safeguards preventing diversion to prohibited purposes.

*Lastly*, the treaty should be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. The CD includes all the relevant stakeholders and strictly operates under the consensus rule allowing each Member State to safeguard its vital interests. A treaty negotiated outside the CD will lack legitimacy and ownership, similar to the pseudo progress sought through the divisive processes like GGEs and High Level Expert Groups.

## **Madam President,**

Any arms control, non-proliferation or disarmament treaty that diminishes the security of any State would be a non-starter. No country can be expected to enter into negotiations on a treaty that would be detrimental to its national security, as was the case when a large group of countries refused to engage with the TPNW negotiations outside the CD and on many issues inside the CD including nuclear disarmament. These countries did not attempt to sort out their concerns on the negotiating table, when they had clarity about the impact of such measures on their security.

Pakistan believes that a treaty which only results in a cut-off in the production of fissile material, as interpreted under the Shannon Mandate by the nuclear weapons possessors, will not contribute to nuclear disarmament. It will also not realize our larger objective of prevention of nuclear war.

A cut-off treaty would jeopardize Pakistan's security unless it addresses the vast asymmetries in existing stocks of fissile material in our region. The situation has been compounded by the grant of discriminatory NSG waiver and the conclusion of bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreements. Such measures endanger regional strategic stability in South Asia.

Among the states that possess nuclear weapons, most have either announced unilateral moratorium on the production of fissile material or attained a level of comfort through continued national production and the conclusion of special arrangements. It is only after amassing tons of fissile material, far in excess of any foreseeable defence need, that they were converted to the cause of FMCT. Unlike Pakistan, FMCT is a completely cost-free exercise for them and an exercise for optics to sell progress as what they refer to as “next step”.

Also, for the non-nuclear weapon States parties to the NPT, many of which enjoy a nuclear umbrella under extended nuclear deterrence arrangements, an FMCT would not entail any new obligation.

**Madam President,**

As for the view that ‘existing stocks’ is not an issue, we would beg to respectfully differ. By any objective assessment of the history of this issue, the disagreement over the scope of the Treaty is one of the major stumbling blocks in the path of progress.

It is not simply a language, or a declaration issue as has been suggested. For Pakistan, the question of stockpiles is a direct national security concern, which we have explained in detail. However, we have not heard from the states opposing its inclusion, how that affects their security concerns.

In our proposal contained in CD/2036, we had put forward several ideas on how to capture the existing stocks including in following categories:

- (i) for nuclear weapons; (ii) in excess to nuclear weapon requirements; (iii) for non-proscribed military use; and (iv) and, for civilian use,

These questions can be further deliberated during the course of negotiations. However, a negotiating mandate which explicitly includes the question of existing stocks is essential to move forward.

**Madam President,**

We have also listened to the references made to the work done in the GGE and HLEPG.

Pakistan does not accept any conclusions or recommendations produced by both the GGE and the Expert preparatory Group. We reject their reports. It can in no way constitute the basis for further consideration of the fissile material issue by the international community, whether inside or outside the CD.

Progress on a fissile material treaty can neither be achieved by changing the format or forum, nor by imposing solutions that exclude the views of major stakeholders.

It has also been argued today that a cut-off treaty is in strategic interests of countries who oppose it. We would like to point out that a Fissile Material Treaty with past production is in strategic interest of everybody, as it would be both a disarmament as well as a non-proliferation measure.

**Madam President,**

In conclusion, the time for FMCT that seeks to freeze existing asymmetry in nuclear arsenals and fissile material stocks held by some nuclear weapons States, has long passed. This outdated proposal does not have any added value for nuclear disarmament either, as is evident from increase in nuclear arsenals by states ostensibly committed to the so-called moratoria on fissile material production.

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

Pakistan has instead proposed a Fissile Material Treaty that addresses the issues in all dimensions, comprehensively, effectively and verifiably and which explicitly incorporates in its scope fissile material stocks. We reiterate our call for starting work in earnest towards developing a new basis for negotiations on a treaty whose scope expressly encompasses existing stocks and applies equally to all States without discrimination.

In addition, Pakistan stands ready to work constructively in this body to advance our substantive work in pursuit of the broader objective of prevention of nuclear war under agenda item 2.

**I thank you.**

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