



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, at the Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva 21 January 2021

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this plenary meeting in a virtual setting. On behalf of my delegation, I congratulate you on assuming the first presidency of this Conference in 2021. We appreciate the transparent manner in which you are fulfilling your responsibilities. We assure you of our full cooperation.

We welcome the new Ambassadors of Algeria, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Venezuela, New Zealand, Bulgaria, Cameroon and Myanmar, and look forward to working with them.

We thank the CD Secretariat team for its support under the skilful leadership of Secretary General Ms. Tatiana Valovaya.

In line with the general format of today's meeting, let me share Pakistan's perspective on the drivers of the international security landscape and its varied impacts, the role and relevance of this body and the priorities it should pursue in the year ahead.

Mr. President,

Over the past year, the global political, security and economic order has deteriorated in several ways. There is palpable erosion of the rules-based international order. The fundamental fabric of multilateralism – universal participation, adherence to rule of law and respect for norms – is falling apart at the seams.

Defiance and abuse of international law, often with impunity, by the big and powerful states is writ large. Accountability for such acts of commission and omission is nearly non-existent. Strategic, commercial and political interests continue to trump professed adherence to universal values.

Unilateralism in various forms and manifestations and zero-sum mindsets are ascendant.

Strategic asymmetries are growing as powerful states continue to seek absolute security and domination. Global military expenditure is on the rise. Modernization programmes of conventional and non-conventional weaponry are in full swing.

Concurrently, the growing pace of weaponization, integration and operationalization of AI, space and cyber technologies is accentuating risks, driving arms race and fuelling antagonism among great powers.

These developments and trends are neither science fiction nor a description of distant past. All of this is happening as we speak. If not halted and reversed, they portend far-reaching consequences for this body, its members and the regions they belong to.

This is the global strategic environment in which the pursuit of arms control agenda and the ability of this Conference to deliver will be tested.

Mr. President,

These power dynamics and the normative erosion continue to unleash cascading geo-political and security impacts on various regions and sub-regions.

Each of the aforementioned dimensions i.e. power and arms asymmetries, wearing down of established norms, defiance of international legality, lack of accountability and prioritization of interests over values are in full display in South Asia.

The biggest state in the region, India, continues to pursue policies of hegemony, subversion and domination over its neighbours, all driven by an extremist ideology and hyper-nationalism.

Imbued with this misguided zeal and emboldened by supply of advanced weapons and technologies, this nuclear armed state is operationalizing offensive doctrines into war-fighting strategies.

There is an unmistakable pattern and method adopted by the Indian ruling party i.e. staging “false flag” operations, externalizing blame and manipulating national sentiment to win elections. This recklessness endangers regional peace and security in South Asia.

A claimant to permanent seat at the UN Security Council, India continues to defy with impunity the same Council’s resolutions by further entrenching its occupation of an internationally recognized disputed territory.

A self-professed largest democracy in the world, it has violated every tenet of international humanitarian and human rights laws; by locking down 8 million people, shutting down all means of communication and rejecting calls for independent investigations into its industrial scale abuses in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Masquerading as a “victim” of terrorism, the racial superiority-inspired BJP regime has unleashed the most brutal state-directed terrorism on Kashmiri youth, women and civilians. This Government has also financed, abetted, facilitated and directed state-sponsored acts of terrorism against its neighbours. To camouflage this reign of terror, it has launched the world’s most notorious disinformation campaign.

Lack of global accountability has enabled India to continue its defiance of international law, norms and rules. Unabated and generous provision of conventional, non-conventional and sensitive technologies has imbued this regime with unparalleled sense of impunity to perpetuate occupation and foment terrorism.

The international community, including this body, must call out this impunity and insubordination of international legality. Failure to do so entails risks to regional peace and security in South Asia and beyond. This Conference cannot remain oblivious to these clear and present dangers.

Mr. President,

Pakistan considers the CD as a vital organ of the multilateral security architecture; the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiating body and an indispensable part of the UN disarmament machinery.

As the only forum where all militarily significant States participate on an equal footing to pursue arms control and disarmament, the CD’s role and place remains unique. However, this body will remain hamstrung by the effects of a tumultuous geo-political and fragile global security order.

The international bodies mandated to maintain international peace and security and to control arms, have a duty to take cognizance of these trends at the global, regional and sub-regional levels. These bodies have a responsibility to halt and reverse the damage done to the rules based global order as well as the arms control agenda.

A revival of global consensus is therefore urgent to deal with these challenges. While admittedly a complex task, it remains the only viable option for the multilateral arms control machinery to function and deliver, particularly the CD. This consensus must be anchored in the faithful and demonstrable adherence to international law. It must contribute towards enhanced security for all States, at the lowest possible levels of armaments. And it must be ensured that special exemptions and subjective strategic interests are not allowed to trump global and regional stability imperatives.

Pursuing outdated and failed approaches for arms control and disarmament will not yield results. Through equity, non-discrimination, restraint and recognition of legitimate interests of all states, can the CD and other constituents of the disarmament machinery achieve meaningful outcomes.

Mr. President,

The Conference has its own role and responsibility within this larger context. The options for its future work must be responsive to these challenges. Any Conference document that lacks appreciation of these larger realities has not worked for decades. Nor is it likely to do so in the future.

Arbitrary approaches, subjective notions of ripeness and creative drafting have not worked in the past; nor would they, going forward. These actions have also prevented the Conference from addressing its most fundamental agenda item i.e. nuclear disarmament for too long.

In fact, the Conference has not been permitted for several decades from negotiating some of its oldest agenda items, having far-reaching significance for international security.

Blaming the long-standing deadlock on the CD's rules of procedure or methods of its work does not stand the test of facts either. Several important treaties have been successfully negotiated with the same procedures and methods.

Mr. President,

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the goal of a nuclear weapons free world that is achieved in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner. We support commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention towards that end in the CD, without further delay.

We also support the immediate start of negotiations in the CD to conclude treaties on Negative Security Assurances (NSAs) and the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS). Latest developments related to Outer Space add to the urgency of concluding such treaties. Following nuclear disarmament, the issues of NSAs and PAROS have been on the CD's agenda for the longest duration and are the most ripe for commencing negotiations.

The global build-up of advanced weapons, platforms and means of delivery, together with rising tensions, highlights the urgency of dealing with nuclear risks and dangers. This makes work on the agenda item Prevention of Nuclear War a high area of priority for this Conference.

Should there be consensus; Pakistan also stands ready to join substantive work on other contemporary issues such as chemical and biological terrorism, weaponization of cyber space, lethal autonomous weapon systems and other types of destabilizing weapon systems.

Mr. President,

As regards fissile material, calls by a few for a cut-off only treaty or a so called FMCT, as envisaged under the Shannon Mandate, remain diversionary tactics at best. A treaty that ignores asymmetries in fissile material stocks would erode rather than promote international and regional stability and security.

Such a proposal has minimal disarmament value and only serves to freeze the status quo to the perpetual strategic advantage of a select few. That these asymmetries in our region are being further accentuated by generous external support, speaks to the flawed and untenable nature of this outdated mantra.

On the other hand, Pakistan has called for a Fissile Material Treaty that covers existing stocks in a verifiable manner. The Shannon Mandate and the so called FMCT are a relic of the past. They are no longer valid in the current strategic environment in our region and its direct impact on our national security. Nor do they represent solutions to contemporary arms control and disarmament requirements.

Time has come to work towards developing a new basis for negotiations on a treaty whose scope expressly encompasses existing stocks and applies equally to all States without discrimination. Any proposed treaty that is completely cost-free for its proponents, while being disproportionately detrimental to the legitimate security interests of my country, would remain a non-starter.

Mr. President,

The CD has and should continue to resume substantive work on all its agenda items. Drawing on what has worked and what has not remains imperative. It is vital that all agenda items are treated in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

My delegation will continue to engage with you, Mr. President, and other members of the CD to resume substantive work on all agenda items and where agreeable, on new and emerging issues.

We thank you for the proposed draft Programme of Work. We are examining it carefully and will provide feedback, in due course. We will engage in this exercise constructively and on the basis of the parameters I have outlined above.

I thank you.
