



**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**

12 May 2021

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this plenary meeting as well as your outreach prior to this meeting. We also thank the distinguished panellists for their contribution on issues related to Nuclear Disarmament Verification yesterday. We also appreciate the support of the Secretariat to organize this meeting.

In line with the framework that you have outlined for our meeting, I wish to share our perspective on issues related to agenda item 1 titled “cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament”.

We align ourselves with the statement made by Iraq on behalf of G-21 on the nuclear disarmament agenda of this Conference.

Mr. President,

Nuclear disarmament has remained a top priority of the international community since the advent of nuclear weapons. The very first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in January 1946 inter alia called for nuclear disarmament. This long-standing global priority was accorded its due importance by the CD at its very first session in 1979, when it included nuclear disarmament as its premier agenda item.

During the past 75 years of the UN and the 42 years of this Conference, the issue of nuclear disarmament has remained an overriding and over-ripe priority of the international community.

Yet, this global priority has not seen progress at the multilateral level. In fact, over the past several decades it has witnessed regression.

Mr. President,

The reasons for this backsliding are not as difficult to fathom, as some would like us to believe. At the root is an unwillingness to fulfil legal obligations and solemn commitments. Unfortunately, accountability has been conspicuously missing for

failure to fulfil nuclear disarmament obligations under the relevant international treaty.

It is in this backdrop, then, that we hear self-serving narratives and moves to deflect international attention to other issues. We are told that nuclear disarmament cannot happen, forget about it, and let us pursue cost free endeavours such as quantitative capping of fissile material.

Similarly, **Mr. President**, another fundamental obstacle to progress in this vital area is the refusal by some to distinguish the linkages between nuclear disarmament and the security considerations that drive states to acquire these weapons.

That some states have been compelled to rely on nuclear weapons as deterrence in face of skewed conventional capabilities and resultant threat perceptions both at the regional and global level continue to be ignored.

Mr. President,

Much as progress in nuclear disarmament continues to be stalled, strategic developments at the global level are increasingly worrisome. Thousands of these weapons and their means of delivery continue to be retained, expanded and modernized.

Apart from qualitative and quantitative increments in the nuclear arsenals, states carrying these activities continue to violate their legal obligations not to do so. These steps also go against the grain of international consensus.

Even more worryingly, these actions entail potential and real risks of reviving the nuclear arms race, much less its cessation.

And Given the organic linkage between nuclear and conventional capabilities, these developments can also ignite arms race beyond the nuclear domain, particularly in situations with asymmetry in conventional and nuclear capabilities

And were these allowed to take place, the prospects of nuclear disarmament would further diminish, if not end altogether.

Several decades ago, the strategic implications of nuclear weapons were tied to their means of delivery. Lethality against a potential adversary was a function of these systems. The age we live in now, with increasing weaponization, integration and operationalization of space and cyber technologies, and hypersonic delivery systems, this lethality and the ensuing risks have multiplied manifold, as have implications for strategic entanglement.

Mr. President,

In the face of these negative developments and disturbing trends, the larger question is what gives? The strategic environment should not be an excuse for inaction. It should serve a call for renewed diplomatic efforts.

We do not discount the daunting nature of the challenge in this endeavor. My delegation had proposed a roadmap to address these underlying factors, and to pursue

a nuclear disarmament agenda that lives up to the avowed ethos of an international rules based order.

Let me recount some key elements that are essential to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament and cessation of a nuclear arms race:

First, the nuclear weapon states must demonstrate a renewed commitment to achieve nuclear disarmament within a reasonable timeframe to revalidate the NPT bargain.

Second, as a pragmatic step towards disarmament, the nuclear weapon states need to halt future production and eliminate all existing stocks of fissile materials through a non-discriminatory Fissile Material Treaty.

Third, until nuclear disarmament is achieved, giving non-nuclear weapon states assurances that they will not be threatened with the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, by nuclear weapons states through a universal, unconditional, and legally binding treaty negotiated at the CD.

Fourth, the direct causal relationship of conventional weapons with nuclear arsenals necessitates concrete measures to institute balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, especially at the regional and sub-regional levels.

Fifth, address the motives which drive States to acquire weapons to defend themselves, including perceived threats from superior conventional or non-conventional forces and the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States.

Lastly, strengthening the international legal regime to prevent the militarization of outer space, and bringing cyber weapons and autonomous weapons under effective international control is central to avoiding the challenges of strategic entanglement.

Mr. President,

I take this opportunity to reiterate Pakistan's call for achieving the goal of a nuclear weapons free world that is achieved in a universal, verifiable, time-bound and non-discriminatory manner. As recognized by SSOD-I, the objective of this process should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces. Nuclear disarmament, therefore, needs to be pursued in a comprehensive and holistic manner in accordance with the principles agreed by SSOD-I.

Mr. President,

Let me now also share our perspective on the presentations made yesterday regarding nuclear disarmament verification.

It goes without saying that verification would be an essential element to assure compliance with any future agreements on nuclear disarmament. In this regard, a conceptual exploration and shared understanding on principles of NDV can be useful.

It may even contribute towards verification aspects of an international instrument on nuclear disarmament.

Importantly, however, it should not be seen as a precondition for the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the CD in accordance with the SSOD-I Final Document.

Mr. President,

Nuclear disarmament verification itself can best be addressed in the context of a specific treaty regime, and not in an abstract manner or in a vacuum, nor as an end in itself. Verification has to be rooted in specific treaties.

We appreciate the fact that the conclusions reached by the GGE in its consensus report acknowledged, inter alia, that “the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament will be determined on a case-by-case basis in the context of the negotiations of legally-binding agreements in the area of nuclear disarmament”. We are pleased with the consensus adoption of the GGE’s substantive report and look forward to contributing constructively to its work during the currently established GGE pursuant to UNGA resolution 74/50.

Mr. President,

Going forward, therefore, clarity would be paramount. In order for efforts on verification to remain purposeful, advancing substantive work in the CD is essential on the when and how of nuclear disarmament to provide context to our efforts on NDV.

At the same time, we have a universally agreed framework to anchor the verification work. Let me cite two examples. The consensus Final Document of SSOD-I states that “the form and modalities of the verification to be provided for in any specific agreement depend upon and should be determined by the purposes, scope and nature of the agreement”.

The UNDC, in its 1988 Principles of Verification, agreed that “Determinations about the adequacy, effectiveness and acceptability of specific methods and arrangements intended to verify compliance ... can only be made within the context of that agreement”.

As is evident from these examples, there is no one size fits all in verification, and the context i.e. the specific treaty shapes it. The work of the GGE should, therefore, continue to remain a conceptual exploration of principles, rather than turning it into an illusory pursuit of tenuous tools or institutions that are not needed.

It is only by anchoring our approach in the agreed principles can we truly hope to produce outcomes that serve the purpose of achieving nuclear disarmament and putting an end to the nuclear arms race.

I thank you, Mr. President.
