



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

**Statement by Mr. Muhammad Omar, First Secretary,
at 2nd meeting of Subsidiary Body 2 of the
Conference on Disarmament
17 May 2022**

Mr. Coordinator,

Thank you for convening this meeting.

In my remarks today, I would like to focus on the following three aspects of the agenda item that this subsidiary body has been entrusted with:

First, the mutually reinforcing nature of the strategic, normative and legal dimensions and their salience with respect to the question of preventing a nuclear war, including all related matters.

Second, normative and related measures that need to be considered in order to avert the danger of a nuclear conflict.

Third, possible outcomes from this subsidiary body including its report.

Mr. Coordinator,

Preventing a nuclear war has always been and remains a universally agreed goal. The records of this Conference and UNIDIR reports, which my delegation has cited on several occasions, clearly spell out two interconnected pathways to achieve this objective.

The first path is pursuit of nuclear disarmament, both as a means as well as an end, to avoid a nuclear war. The second path is undertaking steps to prevent a nuclear war until the elimination of nuclear weapons.

These two interlocking pathways must remain central to the work of this subsidiary body.

Mr. Coordinator,

My delegation and others have drawn attention in the previous meeting towards the accentuating factors and triggers of a deteriorating strategic environment, which in turn could lower the threshold for a nuclear war.

As we have pointed out earlier, this diagnostic should lead to corresponding therapeutical measures that are context specific and can help avert a nuclear conflict.

Historic evidence suggests a logical sequence i.e. pursuit of normative measures, followed by codification into legal instruments. Technical means in and of themselves cannot be pursued in isolation, either from the strategic context or the normative glue.

Technical considerations find their relevance only in the context of arms control conventions and treaties. These considerations do not have any independent existence.

Therefore, it is essential to contextualize the work of this subsidiary body in four ways: first by accurately assessing the factors responsible for a fragile strategic environment; second by analyzing the underlying reasons for erosion of the existing norms; three, by re-committing adherence to the fundamental norms of arms control and four laying the foundations for concluding legal instruments within which technical measures can be weaved in.

This approach must be mainstreamed into any substantive work under both pathways i.e. nuclear disarmament measures and steps to prevent nuclear war pending elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Coordinator,

Let me now turn to my second point on consideration of normative and related measures with a view to preventing the outbreak of a nuclear conflict.

First allow me to provide some context.

In the past quarter century, the strategic environment, at the global and regional levels, has undergone fundamental transformation. At least three developments stand out with growing risks involving nuclear weapons.

First, the pervasiveness of technology and its integration into security doctrines, weapons and platforms. Second, the intertwining of the nuclear and non-nuclear; and third, the emergence of new strategic configurations and partnerships.

Together with geopolitical, other drivers of strategic risks have been evident for some time. The breakneck speed of technological progress has permeated into force-multiplying capabilities particularly in the outer space, the ABMs as well as delivery systems, the cyber arena and the military application of AI.

Concurrently, the integration among these capabilities and domains has gathered growing pace, with a direct role in the nuclear domain.

Let me cite from the 2019 UNIDIR study on nuclear risk reduction which inter alia has identified a range of such links and pathways towards a possible nuclear war.

Begin quote, *“space-based assets long critical to the functioning of nuclear operations (including reconnaissance and communication satellites and early-warning sensors) exist in an environment that is growing ever more busy and complex. The development of anti-satellite capabilities and even the presence of space debris can render second-strike capabilities vulnerable; an incidental strike on these assets can drive escalation to nuclear use. Meanwhile, reliance on space assets that serve dual-use purposes—nuclear and non-nuclear — can contribute to the possibility of escalation through entanglement, with attacks targeting non-nuclear capabilities potentially misinterpreted. Advances in nonnuclear capabilities such as hypersonic weapons can have similarly destabilizing effects. In the case of a hypersonic glide vehicle “it may not be known until the very last moment whether it is targeting conventional forces and facilities or nuclear forces”, or whether it may be carrying a conventional or nuclear warhead. These systems and other nuclear-related capabilities present new escalatory chains to use”*. Unquote.

Similarly, addressing the impacts of blurring of the line between and intertwining of nuclear and non-nuclear capabilities is a central consideration in terms of potential for a nuclear war. This includes the destabilizing impacts arising from the development and deployment of ABM systems.

The same UNIDIR study states and I quote, *“the general notion of conventional conflict rising to the level of nuclear use has taken new dimension as the line between conventional and nuclear weapons—and their delivery systems—blurs. Indeed, there appears a growing reliance on nuclear weapons in limited scenarios below the strategic level. Modernization programmes that are enhancing the capabilities and effectiveness of nuclear weapons exacerbate the issue”*. Unquote.

The emergence of new strategic configurations and their growing fusion into security partnerships represent an additional variable as far as global and regional strategic stability equations are concerned. Whether such security partnerships are geared directly or indirectly towards other states is immaterial – since they will be perceived by states not part of these arrangements from a different security calculus.

Mr. Coordinator,

Let me now turn to the normative considerations. Given that this subsidiary body has only two further meetings this year, we propose reaffirmation by this subsidiary body of the following six fundamental norms with respect to prevention of nuclear war:

- Saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war;
- Prohibition of the threat or use of force;
- Pacific settlement of disputes;

- Progressively lower levels of nuclear armaments;
- Pursuit of disarmament measures in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure that no individual State or group of States obtain advantages over others at any stage; and
- Equal security for all States.

In terms of related measures, I would like to highlight the following for both streams of our work at this stage, although additional measures could be added.

Under the nuclear disarmament stream, one of the areas to consider is the issue of fissile materials in all its aspects. The second area of exploration of agreements should be on reducing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons.

Under the pathway for preventing a nuclear war, the areas to consider include the link between nuclear deterrence and conventional force; weapons and doctrines, including Anti-Ballistic Missiles and other new types of destabilizing weapon systems. Another measure should be to examine the role of extended nuclear deterrence including the stationing of nuclear weapons in the territory of non-nuclear weapon states.

Mr. Coordinator,

At this stage, I would elaborate my delegations' position on one of these topics. I would revert to the other areas at a later stage.

As has been pointed out earlier by my delegation and others, any consideration of preventing a nuclear war cannot be insulated from the role of nuclear weapons and their associated components.

It also remains an objective reality that any nuclear war in the foreseeable future would not be fought with nuclear material that is yet to be produced. A future nuclear war will involve fissile material that has already been produced, stockpiled, weaponized, deployed or reserved for such purposes.

Therefore, the question of fissile material needs to be dealt with in all its aspects and dimensions. A fissile material production cut-off alone is at best a partial non-proliferation measure. It does not advance the goal of nuclear disarmament. Nor does it help prevent a nuclear war given that stockpiles are excluded from its purview.

Let me now outline Pakistan's principled views on a Fissile Materials Treaty which are based on the following overarching considerations:

First and foremost, the treaty on fissile materials should provide equal and undiminished security for all States. As recognized by SSOD-I, in the adoption of disarmament measures, the right of each state to security should be kept in mind, and at each stage of the disarmament process, the objective should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces. A treaty which overlooks or circumscribes the security of any state would not work and cannot be negotiated.

Second, the treaty should make a genuine contribution towards the goal of nuclear disarmament and not merely be a non-proliferation instrument.

Third, in addition to a ban on future production, the treaty must also cover the past production or existing stockpiles 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 possessor States, nor between the possessor and non-possessor States. All States Parties should assume equal obligations without any preferential treatment for any category of States.

Fifth, in order to be effective, the treaty should be free of any loopholes by encompassing all types and sources of fissile materials that can be used in nuclear weapons, including their transfers.

Sixth, in order to be credible, the treaty should provide a robust verification mechanism entrusted to a representative and independent treaty 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. However, it should include effective verification measures to safeguard against any misuse or diversion of peaceful-use technology and nuclear materials 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 or the illusions of progress claimed through GGEs, Expert Groups or a variant thereof will lack legitimacy and ownership.

Mr. Coordinator,

Seen in the backdrop of the larger strategic environment and its drivers, the growing geopolitical competition, the eroding trust and confidence, the CD's agenda and its priorities inevitably require a fundamental rethink.

The CD can no longer afford to be held hostage to the self-centred priorities of some states to perpetuate strategic advantages. This Conference must revert to its *raison d'être* of nuclear disarmament. It must be responsive to the existing and emerging challenges at the global and regional levels. It must align its work with the rapid advancements in military technologies, platforms and tools.

The CD can no longer afford to dignify the messianic zeal of some to pursue FMCT in order to mask unsafeguarded fissile material acquisition and its stocks. Neither can this body be convinced by pretensions of those who enjoy nuclear umbrella and extended deterrence, while lending support to a flawed FMCT modelled entirely on non-proliferation measures.

In a hypothetical scenario, were such a so called FMCT in effect, it would have in no manner limited the ability of a state possessing nuclear weapons to increase its nuclear arsenal, even with its long declared moratorium in place, as has happened.

Similarly, declarations of unilateral moratoria of fissile material production are hardly a virtue, as its proponents claim. Such declarations are merely an indicator that such states have acquired fissile material far in excess of their legitimate defence needs. Also, such assertions are neither verifiable nor irreversible.

If all states supporting a so called FMCT are ready for such a moratorium, they should seriously consider transforming these declarations into a legal instrument among themselves to demonstrate their commitment to nuclear disarmament.

A quarter century ago, the CD members chose to craft a mandate in good faith and in hopes to advance genuine progress on nuclear disarmament. Subsequent discussions have, however, made it plain that some states remained singularly fixated on ensuring that stocks are not covered under the treaty, so as to preserve their respective strategic advantages and perpetuation of the status quo. This resistance to crafting a clear mandate that can promote nuclear disarmament explains it all. A fissile material cut-off has far outlived its utility and relevance.

Past lessons and contemporary realities necessitate that our new mandate includes explicit and upfront treatment of fissile material stocks.

Mr. Coordinator,

The proceedings in this Conference and the real world developments make it clear that that progress on fissile materials can neither be achieved by changing the format or forum, nor through creative drafting or by imposition of so-called solutions that ignore the views of major stakeholders. Real progress can only be achieved by addressing the security concerns of all states.

This subsidiary body needs to reconsider the negative effects on any future treaty's prospects generated by misguided policies, based on discrimination and double standards, driven by strategic and commercial considerations. The entire issue of fissile materials needs to be viewed in the broader security and strategic context.

Finally, Mr. Coordinator, I wish to thank you for circulating and for seeking inputs on the first draft of SB-2 report. My delegation has shared its inputs. I wish to make two short points.

First, while understanding the practicalities of being concise, the final report should be comprehensive and balanced i.e. it should equally highlight the various topics, proposals, and considerations discussed by this subsidiary body.

Secondly, in terms of structure and format, the report should also be clearly based on and reflect the topics of our meetings, in line with your letter of 15 March 2022 and the mandate contained in the decision CD/2229.

I thank you.
