



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

**Statement by Mr. Muhammad Omar, First Secretary,  
at Second Meeting of Subsidiary Body 5, Conference on Disarmament, Geneva  
26 May 2022**

**Mr. Coordinator,**

Thank you for convening this meeting.

In line with your proposed structure for meetings of this subsidiary body, I shall outline my delegation's perspective on CD's agenda items 7 transparency in armaments today. I will address item 6, comprehensive program of disarmament, at a later stage.

**Mr. Coordinator,**

The item under discussion today invariably has threads connecting to other agenda items with respect to the larger arms control and disarmament questions.

Nevertheless, I would limit my remarks to the importance of transparency in armaments and the significance of its faithful consideration as an essential element for progress at this body – as is indeed true for all other agenda items.

**Mr. Coordinator,**

Three decades ago, the CD was requested to, and I quote “address as soon as possible, the question of the interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, including military holdings and procurement through national production, and to elaborate universal and nondiscriminatory practical means to increase openness and transparency in this field” end quote.

The CD was also tasked, and I quote again, “to address the problems of, and the elaboration of practical means to increase, openness and transparency related to the transfer of high technology with military applications and to weapons of mass destruction”, end quote.

The underlying premise was that increased openness and transparency in the field of armaments could enhance confidence, ease tensions, strengthen regional and international peace and security and contribute to restraints in military production and the transfer of arms. Central to this notion was the principle that no

single state, especially in areas of tension, should be able to strive for levels of armaments that did not bear any relationship to its self-defence needs.

**Mr. Coordinator,**

Notwithstanding the goals set out under this item, the CD's treatment of this item has been less than satisfactory. An Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments was established in 1993 and worked till 1994. The CD has since been unable to reach agreement on its re-establishment.

Among the stumbling blocks has been the opposition by some to any consideration of WMDs, their means of delivery, high technology with military applications and other advanced conventional weapons when exploring further work under the item. Ironically, as I just quoted, these were among the very reasons that formed the rationale for CD's consideration of this item.

The agenda item, therefore, has since been handled mostly in informal meetings or has acted as a convenient placeholder for raising some aspects of conventional weapons.

**Mr. Coordinator,**

This brief history of the item and its treatment lends itself to two key takeaways.

Firstly, the rationale of bringing this item to the CD highlights that transparency in armaments was and continues to be a means to an end; not an end in itself. Its ultimate objective remains to seek restraints, promote confidence, ease tensions and resolution of disputes through negotiations and mediations at the sub-regional, regional, and global levels, contributing to the larger goal of equal and undiminished security for all and a general reduction of all types of armaments.

And secondly, the notion of transparency was envisaged to be forward looking, promote non-discriminatory approaches and tools, focus on high technology, which in today's jargon would be new and emerging technologies and sophisticated weapons, and to also cover aspects of WMDs.

Unfortunately, in stark contrast to these foundational motivations and purposes, the approaches on matters related to this item have followed a regressive course. The central principles and rationale for the item have continued to be disregarded in the subjective interest of a few.

Rather than elaborating universal and nondiscriminatory means to increase openness and transparency to enhance confidence, ease tensions, strengthen regional and international peace and security and contribute to restraint in military production and the transfer of arms, as originally called for, we continue to witness the complete opposite.

Among the list of concerns, the level and scale of global military expenditures figures prominently. According to SIPRI, in 2021 world military expenditure surpassed the two trillion US dollar mark for the first time. The year before, saw a

2.6 per cent increase in world military spending when global gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by over 4 per cent during the pandemic. Global military spending as a share of GDP also saw the biggest year-on-year rise in well over a decade. Unsurprisingly, almost all credit goes to some of the big and powerful countries.

Serious concerns also remain over the growing transfers of armaments and sophisticated weaponry especially in volatile regions, which are inconsistent with the imperatives of maintaining peace, security and stability.

In the same vein, the application of criteria for transferring arms remains shrouded in mystery. Policies of double standards persist, and South Asia has witnessed universal principles being brushed aside for strategic and commercial considerations. The widening gap between championing global norms and actual arms transfer behavior must be plugged.

**Mr. Coordinator,**

Despite these acts of omission and commission, there have been a few bright spots in the context of this item outside the CD, such as the UN Arms Register and guidelines agreed by UNDC, among others. While not without their own shortcomings, parts of the UN machinery have contributed positively to the topic. Unfortunately, the CD has not been able to show a good score card.

And this brings me to my final point i.e. the question of how can this subsidiary body contribute meaningfully?

In our view, this starts with contextualizing our work under this item in light of the original principles I stated above, as well as our contemporary milieu and requirements.

**Mr. Coordinator,**

We know that new weapons systems – both strategic and conventional – continue to be improved, developed and deployed in several parts of the world. Among others, ABM systems, ASAT weapons, and other sophisticated strategic systems continue to be inducted. Worrying trends such as the weaponization of outer space, cyber weapons and production of sophisticated conventional weapons with destructive capacity equal to WMDs are on the rise. Integration of AI in weaponry has produced a unique and novel class of weapons i.e. LAWS, with their multi-faceted concerns. The links of these disturbing trends with the continuing reliance on nuclear weapons and their further development has also been evidenced.

These developments are dangerously destabilizing and carry serious implications for regional as well as global peace and security. They also point to the very areas that transparency in armaments must also focus in the world of today.

Contrary to what some may assert, it is evident that the original intent of bringing the item was never to limit transparency discussions to the UN Register and its surrounding perennial disagreements alone. It was clearly to identify new means that are universal and non-discriminatory and lead to an end of destabilizing accumulation of all arms; conventional, those with high technology and WMDs.

Given the worrying developments and trends, this subsidiary body must do its part, facilitate the Conference to introspect and revisit outdated approaches, and enable the Conference to recommit itself to the original tasks assigned to it under this agenda item i.e. pursue and evolve new means, tools and mechanisms to promote transparency in all forms of armaments and their means of delivery.

We look forward to working on such a set of recommendations, enshrined in the original purposes of this item as part of our report.

**I thank you.**

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