

Conference on Disarmament
Informal Plenary Meeting – 4 June 2019

Thematic session related to the agenda items of the CD on nuclear disarmament (covering agenda items 1, 2 and 4)

Statement by Usman Jadoon
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Pakistan

Mr. President,

I shall briefly share views on issues related to items 1, 2 and 4 of the CD's agenda. Item 1 titled "cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament" and item-4 on "negative security assurances" were placed on the agenda at the very first session of the CD in 1979. Since 1984, the "prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters" has also featured as a standalone item.

During the 40 years that these items have featured on the CD's agenda, numerous ideas and proposals have been put forward for ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Some favour a "step-by-step" approach, also termed as a "progressive" or "building-blocks" model (and I understand that a new hybrid in the form of "stepping-stones" is also in the offing). Others prefer a comprehensive approach, *a la* CWC, establishing a ban on nuclear weapons along with their total elimination in a time-bound manner. Yet others, frustrated with the perceived lack of progress and concerned with the humanitarian consequences, have already codified a treaty outside the CD prohibiting nuclear weapons – without the participation of States that possess these weapons or rely on them for their security. A framework convention has also been suggested in the past, consisting of a chapeau agreement establishing key prohibitions and providing for the subsequent negotiation of protocols elaborating elimination measures. The first Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) agreed by consensus on a roadmap towards general and complete disarmament with nuclear disarmament as the top priority.

There is no dearth of conceptual approaches, draft treaty texts, working papers, declarations and resolutions of the UN General Assembly, exhortations from world leaders and civil society organizations offering different pathways for achieving the goal of a nuclear weapons free world. What is missing, in my view, is the security conditions that allow for progress on these various pathways. In an environment where mistrust is growing, great power competition is re-emerging, new technologies from cyber to outer space, and Artificial Intelligence to Hypersonic delivery systems are shaping threat perceptions, a handful of countries are persisting with efforts to establish their hegemony and dominance – both at the regional and global levels – with nuclear disarmament appearing as elusive a goal as ever.

Mr. President,

So what can we do. Sitting back and letting the course correct itself, or take a turn for the worse, is not an option. The strategic environment is not an excuse for inaction, but rather should serve as a call for renewed diplomatic efforts. It is incumbent upon us to address those underlying factors that can reverse the slide. Let me offer a few prescriptions from our point of view:

One, recognize the right of all States to equal security. Unilateralism and quest for hegemony must be shunned in favour of cooperative multilateralism and an equitable world order.

Two, address the root causes and motives that drive States to acquire nuclear weapons, which in most cases are based on existential security concerns.

Three, express a renewed commitment to universal nuclear disarmament, recognizing the special responsibility of States with larger military capabilities to take the lead, within the context of a re-energized collective security system that can guarantee peace and stability in a world without nuclear weapons.

Four, evolve a criteria-based and non-discriminatory approach for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate safeguards in accordance with respective international obligations of States.

Five, pending nuclear disarmament, provide effective guarantees to non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons through the conclusion of a universal and legally-binding treaty in the CD.

Six, strengthen the legal regime to prevent the weaponisation of outer space by undertaking negotiations to this effect in the CD.

Seven, as a concrete step towards nuclear disarmament, address both the past as well as future production of fissile materials through the conclusion of a non-discriminatory Fissile Material Treaty in the CD.

Eight, bring Cyber Weapons, Autonomous Weapons and other new types of weapon systems under appropriate international control, regulations and prohibitions.

Nine, address regional security issues through confidence building measures, dialogue and diplomacy, including the establishment of a Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia; the creation of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East; and a denuclearised Korean Peninsula.

Lastly, pursue mutual and balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, recognizing their direct causal relationship with the continued reliance on nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

Many a delegates here in this chamber either lament the “lack of political will” or blame the institution of the CD and its working methods for the current state of affairs. Those are only the symptoms of the malaise that afflicts the international disarmament landscape. The CD does not exist in a vacuum and cannot remain immune to the strategic environment in which it operates. It has had remarkable successes in the past in concluding treaties that were genuinely equitable and catered to equal and undiminished security for all. The CD’s membership, encompassing all the relevant stakeholders and its rules of procedure allowing each member state to safeguard its vital interests, are essential pre-requisites for concluding disarmament treaties. It is our collective responsibility to preserve this unique body and utilise it to its optimum potential for the fulfilment of its mandate across all agenda items.

I thank you, Mr. President.