

Conference on Disarmament
Plenary Meeting, 31 January 2019

Statement by Pakistan

Mr. President,

We thank you for circulating a draft Programme of Work for the CD's 2019 session. We have forwarded it to our capital and are awaiting their comments and instructions. Our initial reaction to the draft is as follows.

We appreciate your attempt to suggest negotiating mandates on the issues of nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances. These important matters have been languishing on the CD's agenda for decades and require immediate and urgent attention. We are of the view that their mandates should be strengthened and made more result-oriented towards the conclusion of concrete legally binding treaties.

We note with satisfaction that you have also attempted to propose negotiating mandates on some other contemporary issues falling under agenda items 5, 6 and 7, such as biological security, emerging weapons technologies and transparency in armaments. While greater precision and clarity can be added to the exact mandate and topics for negotiations under these items, we see it as a step in the right direction.

In short, my delegation would be amenable to going along with negotiating mandates on the six issues identified in paragraphs 6 (b) to 6 (g) of the draft PoW with appropriate modifications.

Mr. President,

We were disappointed to observe that you did not address our concern in proposing a mandate for negotiations on the issue of fissile material. As conveyed to you during our bilateral consultations and later during the last plenary meeting, Pakistan is not able to join negotiations on a treaty that is limited to only banning the production of fissile material, on the basis of the Shannon Mandate. We will, however, be positively disposed to it if the negotiating mandate expressly covers existing stocks in the treaty's scope.

There are two glaring differences between the mandate proposed by you for FMT negotiations, contained in paragraph 6 (a), and the mandates proposed for the negotiations on the other six issues mentioned in paragraphs 6 (b) to (g):

First, the negotiation on FMT is envisaged to be held on the basis of document CD/1299 or the Shannon Mandate. This restricts the mandate and scope of the negotiations upfront, in a manner that would contribute little to nuclear disarmament and prove detrimental to Pakistan's national security. This is not the case for the other six issues mentioned in the succeeding paragraphs, which neither prescribe any pre-conditions nor restrict the scope of negotiations.

Second, para 6 (a) mentions that the negotiations on the fissile material issue will be held to reach agreement on a "treaty", whereas for the other six items in paragraphs 6 (b) to (g), the formulations state that the negotiations will be held to reach agreement simply on some undefined "effective measures". Only the issue of FMT is being treated in a preferential and differentiated manner.

Mr. President,

These two major inconsistencies need to be addressed. We would therefore propose amendments to paragraph 6 (a). We could also live either with the deletion of paragraph 6 (a) altogether, or with a discussion mandate identical to that of Subsidiary Body 2 last year. We can provide you with concrete language amendments to that effect. As explained by us on numerous occasions, this matter concerns our supreme national security interests and therefore leaves us with no room for flexibility or ambiguity.

Before concluding, I would like to again stress that for a consensus-based body like the CD, the views and concerns of all member states must be taken on board before tabling any draft decision. We sincerely hope that the Conference will be able to achieve consensus on a programme of work in order to commence its substantive business. Should that not be the case, it would be advisable to start exploring other options and alternatives for resuming substantive work, building on the momentum created last year. Lastly, we welcome and appreciate your remark that you will be open to receiving comments and amendments on the draft PoW and would be ready to revise it to address all concerns.

I thank you, Mr. President.