

Conference on Disarmament
Plenary Meeting, 28 February 2019

Statement by Pakistan

Mr. President,

We thank you for circulating the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.619. We agree with your sobering but realistic assessment, mentioned in your covering letter, that “there is no consensus for launching negotiations on any issue at this time”. In this situation, holding substantive discussion on all agenda items, without any pre-conditions and without any pre-disposition towards particular outcomes, seems to be the next best alternative. Such discussions have been held on a regular basis in the past and have proved valuable for developing a better understanding of each other’s positions and concerns. Your proposal provides a good basis for again putting in place such a framework for substantive discussions in the CD.

We have forwarded your proposal to our capital and can share some initial feedback at this stage.

Mr. President,

We note that the decision differs in many respects from the one adopted last year on the establishment of Subsidiary Bodies. In some cases, the change is based on practical considerations and lessons learnt from last year’s experience, and are hence welcome. For instance, the suggestion to divide the reports of the SBs in two sections – one part on commonalities and recommendations to be agreed by consensus, and a second part containing factual details – could prove more efficient compared to last year’s experience. However, it needs to be made clear and explicit in the draft decision that the Coordinator’s report will be “factual” and “under his/her own responsibility”, “in a personal capacity”, and “without prejudice to national positions”. It is not clearly stated as such in the current draft.

Some of the other differences proposed by you are of a more substantive nature. Let me elaborate.

- (i) *First*, you have proposed that the Subsidiary Bodies be established on the so-called four core issues, and not on the agenda items as was the case last year. We would prefer reverting to last year’s successful formula using the same formulations. If we are to build on last year’s work, it is but natural to use the same form and format.
- (ii) *Second*, some selective topics have been proposed for discussions in each SB, which might not be necessarily comprehensive and exhaustive. These lists need to be reviewed. In the case of SB-2, it should include goals and objectives; in the case of SB-3, addition of a

reference to the prevention of placement of weapons in outer space and a prohibition on the use or threat of use of force against outer space objects, while avoiding topics that fall in the ambit of COPUOS; for SB-1 and SB-4, the lists need to be rationalized and expanded considerably. Another option would be to do away with the listing of topics altogether.

- (iii) *Third*, a critical distinction has been made between the mandates for SBs 1 and 3 on the one hand, and SBs 2 and 4 on the other. While the former two refer to “options for negotiations”, this phrase does not appear in the case of SBs 2 and 4. This needs to be rectified. Without this addition, the mandate of the different SBs would not be evenly balanced.
- (iv) *Fourth*, the mandate for the vital discussion on new and emerging issues has been relegated in importance, by assigning them to a Special Coordinator instead of under a dedicated SB. This too needs to be rectified. This cluster of issues, as highlighted most recently by the UN Secretary General in this chamber, merits a dedicated SB. It needs more, and not less attention as implied from the draft decision.
- (v) *Fifth*, you have proposed the appointment of a group of Special Coordinators for reviewing the working methods and membership expansion of the CD. We do not see the linkage between the CD’s impasse and its working methods. We are, therefore, still studying the utility and the implications of reviewing the CD’s methods of work and rules of procedure, and the concrete language to that effect proposed by you in the draft decision.

Mr. President,

The language in the draft decision with respect to the consideration and approval of the respective reports by the SBs, and their further adoption by the CD, needs to be clarified and made unambiguous. The current text states that the reports shall be presented by the Coordinators “at the final formal meeting of the Subsidiary Body”, but does not specify their further disposal including any possible action by the Conference.

Mr. President,

We stand ready to engage with you and with other fellow member states to address these issues. You have provided us with a solid starting point. We appreciate the informal consultations and outreach carried out by you. We assure you of our continued constructive cooperation in arriving at a consensus text leading to the resumption of substantive work in the CD. We remain committed to it. And we have full confidence in your diplomatic abilities to guide us towards that objective.

I thank you, Mr. President.