

Conference on Disarmament
Plenary Meeting, 30 July 2019

Statement by Pakistan

Mr. President,

I would also like to begin by expressing our heartfelt condolences on the passing away of Mr. Yukiya Amano, an accomplished Japanese diplomat and an outstanding Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We thank you for organizing this meeting on a topic that is not only the raison d'être of the CD but also the top priority of the majority of its members. We thank the distinguished panellists for their thoughtful remarks and valuable contributions. We would particularly like to thank Dr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO PrepCom for his presence in the CD and for his substantive remarks and optimistic message.

Given the presence of Dr. Zerbo in the CD today, I would like to begin with a few remarks regarding the CTBT. Pakistan participated actively and constructively in the CTBT negotiations in this chamber, and voted in favour of its subsequent adoption by the UN General Assembly in 1996. We have since been voting in favour of the annual CTBT resolution in the First Committee and at the UN General Assembly. As noted by Dr. Zerbo, Pakistan is also an accredited observer State of the CTBTO PrepCom and regularly attends its meetings.

Pakistan is observing a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing. As noted by us on many occasions, Pakistan was not the first to test in South Asia and would not be the first to resume testing. Our decision to sign the CTBT would be guided by our regional security dynamics. We believe that regional and global efforts complement each other, and should be pursued in parallel. In the context of our region, Pakistan has proposed a bilateral arrangement to India on a nuclear test ban. It would go a long way in strengthening the global norm against nuclear testing and promote regional stability. The debate in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) on membership criteria for non-NPT states affords the NSG Participating Governments another opportunity to strengthen the norm on non-testing.

Mr. President,

Turning to the topic of today's discussions. The very first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946 established a commission with the task to make proposals for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction."

In 1978, the first special session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament, SSOD-I, recognized nuclear disarmament as the highest priority and the *raison d'être* of the CD. The Final Document of SSOD-I established general and complete disarmament under effective international control as the final objective, and recognized the time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons as the immediate goal. SSOD-I agreed by consensus that, 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 would be undiminished security for all States at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

Over time, however, there has been a progressive erosion of the international consensus on nuclear disarmament. The prime objective of the disarmament process – the attainment of equal and undiminished security for all States – is being ignored. A select few States are persisting with the goal of perpetuating the unequal status quo to their continued strategic advantage. They carry on with diverting attention from the non-fulfilment of their obligations and commitments on nuclear disarmament to the conclusion of additional, self-serving horizontal non-proliferation measures.

These same States continue to undermine the non-proliferation regime by exercising double standards and applying the established rules and norms in a discriminatory manner, suiting their political objectives, thus harming regional and global strategic stability and undermining progress in the CD.

Mr. President,

On the other end of the spectrum lies the more recent initiative that trivializes national security concerns. In highlighting the humanitarian and moral imperatives, it ignores the vital strategic considerations that underpin nuclear disarmament. While we completely understand and sympathize with the frustrations and disappointments that propel such initiatives, the fact remains that, whether we like it or not, nuclear disarmament cannot progress without addressing the security concerns of States that rely on nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

Pakistan remains committed to the goal of a nuclear weapons free world. We believe that nuclear disarmament can only be achieved as a cooperative and universally agreed undertaking, through a consensus-based process involving all the relevant stakeholders, resulting in equal and undiminished, if not increased security for all States. The eventual objective must be the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a reenergized collective security system. We need approaches that unite us in our common endeavour towards a nuclear weapons free world, and not those that create additional fissures.

We will have to recognize and address the key motivations that drive States like Pakistan to possess nuclear weapons. These include: one, threats from larger military forces – both nuclear and conventional; two, the existence of disputes with more powerful states and the failure of UN to implement its own resolutions to resolve such disputes; three, the failure of the UN collective security system to deter aggression and military threats; and four, discrimination in the application of international norms and standards. These legitimate motivations are different from those States that retain nuclear weapons as a matter of prestige, either to maintain or to attain the status of a global power.

Mr. President,

Pakistan notes the recent initiative launched by the United States on Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND). We took part in the CEND plenary earlier this month and shared our perspectives, which were also elaborated during the CD meeting on 26 March. Progress on arms control and disarmament cannot be delinked from the security concerns which force States to resort to nuclear deterrence for self-defence. As such, a dialogue on creating the environment for nuclear disarmament, and addressing the underlying issues which hamper this objective, is indeed an essential one. We do not see it as a pre-condition or pre-requisite for progress on nuclear disarmament in the CD, but rather view it as an unavoidable part of that process. Going forward with the CEND initiative, it is important to ensure an inclusive and transparent process in which the views of all stakeholders along with all relevant factors are fully taken into account on a consensus basis.

I thank you, Mr. President.