Statement

by

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Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the Conference on Disarmament

at the

First Committee Thematic Debate

on Disarmament Machinery

(66th Session of the UNGA)
Mr. Chairman,

The shared quest to control, regulate and eventually reduce conventional and non-conventional arms has always required agreed and effective negotiating mechanisms.

The most consequential and consensual structure for negotiating conventions and treaties in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation was finally created by the United Nations in the last century.

The UN Disarmament Machinery, as we know it, was created by the General Assembly in its First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-I) thirty three years ago. The key requirement set forth by SSOD-I in the context of the disarmament machinery is: "The adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage."

Mr. Chairman,

In the last two years, we have heard repeatedly that the machinery created in 1978 has perhaps been unable to create an environment conducive to norm-building, deliberations and negotiations on disarmament subjects. Hence, the growing mantra for revitalizing the international disarmament machinery and the convening of two High Level Meetings to promote this goal.

This machinery, of which the Conference on Disarmament and the UN Disarmament Commission are important parts, is seen by some States to have failed the purposes for which they were created. The description of the state of this machinery and the diagnosis of its ailment are partial and focus almost exclusively on symptoms rather than the causes.

Mr. Chairman,

The primary purpose of creating the CD was Nuclear Disarmament - an agenda item on which no progress has been allowed by some major powers for the last 32 years. The leading critics of the CD are themselves responsible for dragging their feet on the most important issue of Nuclear Disarmament, Negative Security Assurances, and PAROS. These countries have also played a major role in ensuring CD’s inactivity for decades and stalled deliberations in the Disarmament Commission. Their self-righteous concerns are limited to progress on a single issue in the CD, with no interest to the other three core issues on the CD’s agenda.

In 2008, the UN Secretary General articulating his five point disarmament proposals accorded primacy to Nuclear Disarmament. The reason why the Secretary General made that call is the fact that the CD has not been able to live up to its raison d’ etre, i.e. Nuclear Disarmament for more than three decades. It is also a fact that the CD has failed to make any substantive progress for 15 years after concluding CTBT negotiations. Yet, it is surprising to note that the
present calls for revitalization of the CD selectively project developments of the last two years by fixating on a single issue.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to objectively evaluate the causes underlying the impasse at the CD, it is important to acknowledge the following basic facts:

The CD's work or inactivity is a reflection of prevailing political realities as it does not operate in a vacuum. No treaty can be negotiated in the CD which is contrary to the security interests of any of its member state. In fact, the Rule of Consensus was introduced in the CD's Rules of Procedure to ensure this point. Hence, progress in the CD is only possible by meeting or addressing the security concerns of all CD member states. The CD’s lack of progress cannot be attributed to its Rules of Procedure since landmark instruments like the CWC and the CTBT were negotiated successfully with the same rules.

Mr. Chairman,

These facts signify that the problems faced by the CD are not of an organizational or procedural nature. It is, therefore, time for us to face the reality and recognize the true reasons due to which the CD has been "dysfunctional".

The CD's history clearly demonstrates a pattern of negotiating only those agreements that do not undermine or compromise the security interest of powerful states. BWC and CWC were negotiated only when biological and chemical weapons became redundant in terms of their operational utility. CTBT was concluded once the major powers had carried out sufficient number of nuclear tests and further testing became unnecessary since they had alternate techniques available in the form of computer simulation.

The same model and approach is being pursued in the case of FMCT. Now, after having developed huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons as well as stocks of fissile material, especially HEU and weapons grade plutonium, which can be quickly converted into nuclear warheads, these major powers are ready to conclude a treaty that will only ban future production of fissile material, since they no longer need more of it. This approach is "cost free" for them as this will not undermine or compromise their security.

Mr. Chairman,

Moreover, in the last few years, the discriminatory nuclear cooperation policies pursued by some major powers have created insecurities and imbalances. These policies, by undermining international non-proliferation norms in pursuit of power and profit, have accentuated the asymmetry in fissile material stocks in our region. Regrettably, these discriminatory policies continue and have found no opposition amongst the NSG members, comprised of some of the
most ardent supporters of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and strongest critics of “lack of progress in the CD”.

It is for these reasons that Pakistan has been obliged to take a stand against nuclear selectivity, discrimination and exceptionalism. No country can be expected to compromise on its fundamental security interests for an instrument that is cost free for all other concerned countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The challenges faced by the international disarmament agenda and the machinery go beyond the CD. The components of contemporary disarmament machinery are interlinked. Other parts of this machinery i.e. the UNDC and the First Committee have done as well or as bad as the CD. The UNDC has not been able to evolve an agreed document for more than a decade and half. The resolutions adopted by this Committee have also not found any traction politically for many years. Why then single out the CD for its inactivity.

Therefore, the revitalization of those components, including the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission, should therefore be simultaneous and proceed in an integrated and holistic manner. The following steps and measures would need to be taken:

a) The agenda of the CD covers a number of critical issues and all issues need to be treated in an equal and balanced manner. Lack of progress on one issue due to security concerns of states should not lead to impasse in the CD as other issues on its agenda can and should be taken up for consideration.

b) Nuclear Disarmament remains the longest outstanding issue on the CD’s agenda. The 120-member Non-Aligned Movement, which represents the overwhelming majority in the United Nations, has consistently deemed nuclear disarmament as the highest priority for negotiations in the CD.

c) The proposal for a legal instrument on NSAs is another important issue that has been on the agenda of the CD for several years. A legally binding instrument on NSAs would not compromise the strategic interests of any country. In reality, no nuclear weapon state would consider using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon state. Even the threat of doing so is morally reprehensible.

d) We need to recognize the realities and work towards building consensus in the CD by taking into account the legitimate security interests of all states.

c) The CD cannot negotiate through cherry picking issues that some states consider to be ripe.

f) The Nuclear Weapon States need to fulfill their obligations to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament in the CD.

g) Double-standards and selectivity will have to be eliminated in non-proliferation and disarmament measures.

h) Beyond the reform and rationalization of the working methods, the normative and deliberative roles and functions of the First Committee as well the Disarmament Commission need to be revitalized.
Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan strongly believes in the need for preserving all the components of the disarmament machinery that has been developed with consensus. Any effort to bypass or weaken this machinery would undermine consensus and legitimacy. Pakistan would never be part of any such efforts.

Instead of selective and partial solutions aimed at strengthening the disarmament machinery, Pakistan calls for evolving a new and balanced consensus to deal with the present stalemate in the mechanisms and modalities of promoting global peace and security as well as in advancing disarmament negotiations.

In this regard, Pakistan fully supports the long-standing call of NAM countries, which comprise almost two-third of the UN membership, to convene the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-IV). This session would contribute positively towards finding ways to achieve the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, keeping in view the security interests of all states.

Thank you