Chairperson,

As the international and regional security environment worsens, the shared goal of nuclear disarmament agreed at SSOD-I seems even more elusive.

The principal reason is the lack of progress made by the Nuclear Weapon States in fulfilling their nuclear disarmament obligations, while attempting to shift the focus to additional non-proliferation measures that are cost-free for their own strategic calculus.

The situation has been compounded by the creation of exceptions from long-held non-proliferation norms and rules, motivated by strategic and commercial considerations. These ‘special arrangements’ not only denote double standards, but also aid in vertical proliferation by the beneficiary, undermining regional strategic stability, heightening the sense of insecurity, and widening the gap between haves and have-nots.

Chairperson,

Most of the Nuclear Weapon States remain opposed to the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive Nuclear Disarmament Convention in the CD. Their security doctrines do not unconditionally rule out the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States and, accordingly, they continue to stymie negotiations in the CD on Negative Security Assurances. The asymmetries in conventional military forces and strategic capabilities as well as advanced weapon systems continue to widen, while a group of states rejects addressing the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The same countries also oppose the scope of a Fissile Material Treaty to include existing stocks in a manner that would address regional and global asymmetries and contribute to nuclear disarmament.

Chairperson,

The Conference on Disarmament is a vital, integral and indispensable part of the UN disarmament machinery and its sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Regrettably, it has fallen short of expectations in
fulfilling its raison d'etre of nuclear disarmament. During the 2016 session of the CD, serious attempts were made to resume substantive work including on nuclear disarmament. Pakistan welcomed these proposals and worked assiduously during its Presidency of the CD this year to facilitate consensus on a Programme of Work. Pakistan supported the Programmes of Work proposed by Nigeria, United Kingdom, Russian Federation and Poland. We sincerely believe that these proposals were promising.

Chairperson,

The frustration on the slow progress on nuclear disarmament has spilled over into a counter movement that is attempting to shift the discourse. Essential security considerations are being excluded altogether from the debate on nuclear disarmament, attempting to recast the discourse in exclusively humanitarian terms. The existential security concerns of states are being unjustly trivialized, creating additional fissures. Efforts to force progress outside the CD, on a non-consensus basis and without all the key stakeholders on board, would only exacerbate the situation without much real change on ground.

Chairperson,

A rules-based, equitable and non-discriminatory international order needs to be evolved that promotes a comprehensive disarmament agenda. This can only be achieved by:

One, addressing the security concerns of all states;

Two, making progress on strategic as well as conventional weapons limitation and reduction;

Three, strengthening the international non-proliferation regime through objective criteria-based policies, pursuing treaties that are equitable and non-discriminatory; and shunning exceptionalism driven by strategic, political or commercial considerations; and

Four, extending negative security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states.
Chairperson,

Certain countries continue to be guided by their quest for military domination. They possess excessive conventional military capabilities. This is fuelling instability in regions with unresolved disputes.

Nuclear disarmament needs to be pursued in a comprehensive and holistic manner in full accordance with the principles already agreed upon by SSOD-I.

Pakistan fully supports UNGA resolution 70/34. We have consistently supported the goal of a nuclear weapons free world through the conclusion of a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear weapons convention in the CD.

We look forward to the successful outcome of the ongoing work of the OEWG mandated to agree on the agenda and objectives of SSOD-IV. A successful SSOD-IV would be an important step towards revival of global consensus that ensures disarmament and takes the security concerns of all states on board.

Chairperson,

The demand for negative security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapons States in the 1960s in pursuit of their security to which they have a right under the UN Charter. Pakistan, along with a vast majority of UN Member-States believes that this issue is ripe for negotiations at the CD. It will contribute to easing of current strains on the wider disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

During this session, Pakistan will be presenting its traditional draft resolution entitled: “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”, on behalf of a large number of co-sponsoring states. We look forward to its adoption with the widest possible support.

I thank you.