Statement by Mr. Usman Jadoon, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN and Other International Organizations in Geneva

At the Thematic Debate on Disarmament Machinery

(25 October 2017)
Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations has a recognized Disarmament Machinery for negotiating legally binding treaties dealing with arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. The UN General Assembly established it by consensus in 1978 at its First Special Session on Disarmament. The key principle set forth by SSOD-I in the context of this machinery is, *I quote*, “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.” *Unquote*.

The fulfilment of this cardinal objective requires that any legally binding measures be considered and agreed strictly on the basis of consensus, with the participation of all stakeholders, allowing all States to safeguard their vital national security interests. Working on this basis, the UN disarmament machinery has produced significant treaties, including those that have comprehensively prohibited two entire categories of weapons of mass destruction.

Since 1996, the UN Disarmament machinery has not been able to produce a legally binding instrument. This is squarely a consequence of the competing priorities of different member states. Some states are opposing the commencement of negotiations on new treaties simply because they clash with their strategic calculus aimed at perpetuating their military advantage and preferential positions. Other States are rejecting certain instruments – which because of their inherent discriminatory nature – would negatively affect these states’ security disproportionately.

At the same time, there are some states that want progress at any cost, regardless of the impact that it would have on international and regional peace and security, and regardless of whether it will lead to equal and undiminished, if not increased security for all.

The interplay of these factors has resulted in a deadlock of the disarmament machinery. Pakistan shares the disappointment and frustration felt by many over this state of affairs. However, we do not blame the disarmament machinery for this situation. Simply condemning the disarmament machinery or trying to find ways around it, only amounts to addressing the symptoms without tackling the root causes.

Mr. Chairman,

The present situation is a result of the prevailing strategic realities. It has nothing to do with procedures and methods of work. After all, the same disarmament machinery has produced landmark treaties in the past.
The lack of progress on nuclear disarmament – the raison d’etre of the CD – is the principle reason behind the criticism faced by the disarmament machinery. There is no consensus on the start of negotiations on any issue on the CD’s agenda. Among the four core issues, while the vast majority supports substantive work on the over-ripe issues of Nuclear Disarmament, Negative Security Assurances and PAROS, certain countries are only prepared to advance a partial non-proliferation measure in the form of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty that, without addressing existing stocks, will make no contribution to nuclear disarmament.

The challenges confronting the disarmament machinery are not exclusive to the CD. The First Committee and the Disarmament Commission face a similar situation, notwithstanding the significant breakthrough on the conventional weapons-related agenda item at the UNDC this year, which we welcome as a demonstration of progress when requisite political will exists.

The solution to the impasse of the disarmament machinery cannot be found by seeking action outside established forums, especially when pursued on a non-consensus basis and without the participation of all stakeholders. Nor can it be found by reorienting a security-centric discourse into a humanitarian or ethical issue. It is only the CD where all militarily significant states participate on an equal footing and are able to protect their vital security interests under the consensus rule.

Instead of selective, piecemeal and partial solutions, Pakistan calls for evolving a new consensus. My delegation was highly pleased with the successful outcome of the OEWG mandated to agree on the agenda and objectives of SSOD-IV. A successful SSOD-IV would be an important step towards the revival of the global consensus on general and complete disarmament while taking into account the security concerns of all states.

The real challenge, in our view, is how to deal with the political dynamics and developments outside UN conference rooms. As long as the quest for attaining equal security is trumped by hegemonic designs at the regional and global levels, real headway will continue to elude us. Discriminatory revisionism of the global nuclear order, exercise of double standards, and carving of waivers and exceptions driven by strategic and economic motivations, will continue to stand in the way of progress. We have to return to consensus-based, cooperative and non-discriminatory approaches that lead to equal and undiminished security for all.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.