Mr. Chairman,

1. I congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on assuming your offices and assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation. We also thank the Secretariat for their substantive and logistic support.

2. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by NAM.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The international security situation is on a decline, negatively affecting strategic stability at the global and regional levels. Mistrust between States is growing. While many old disputes continue to fester, new conflicts are constantly emerging. The quality and quantity of armaments is on a steady rise. The development of evermore deadly and sophisticated weapons continues unabated. Discrimination and double standards are putting the non-proliferation regime under a great deal of stress.

4. These trends are most pronounced in the South Asian region, marked by one country’s quest to establish its hegemony. Its relentless accumulation of arms coupled with myopically aggressive policies is fuelling insecurity among its neighbours. The security dynamics are further complicated by the discriminatory exemptions made by outside powers for the supply of advanced military hardware and sensitive technologies in our neighbourhood. These actions sidestep non-proliferation considerations for narrow self-interest.

5. Pakistan has been compelled to take necessary measures for ensuring its security by deterring all forms of aggression. Pakistan, however, remains open towards any bilateral or multilateral initiative on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament that is equitable and results in equal and undiminished security for all states. Our conduct continues to be defined by restraint and responsibility, and the avoidance of an arms race.

6. Following Pakistan’s long-standing tradition of bilateral engagement on strategic issues, and undeterred by the lack of a favourable response, Pakistan has proposed a bilateral arrangement between Pakistan and India on a nuclear test ban. We renew our commitment towards this proposal which would go a long way in strengthening the global norm against nuclear testing and promote regional stability.
7. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved without resolving the underlying disputes; agreeing on reciprocal measures for nuclear and missile restraint; and instituting a balance between conventional forces. Our proposal for a strategic restraint regime in South Asia, based on these three inter-locking elements, remains on the table.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The growing dissatisfaction with inactivity of the UN disarmament machinery due to the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament is reaching a tipping point. The attempt by some states to divert attention from the non-fulfilment of their disarmament obligations, by proposing additional non-proliferation measures – that are completely cost-free for them, but carry huge implications for other states’ security – is no longer working.

9. Another approach, that trivializes vital security considerations and seeks to ban nuclear weapons on humanitarian and ethical grounds, has also proved highly divisive. While we understand and empathize with the sense of frustration and disappointment that propelled this initiative, the fact remains that nuclear weapons cannot be eliminated without addressing the concerns of states that rely on them for their security.

10. We need approaches that unite us in our common endeavour towards a nuclear weapons free world. 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 security for all states, as enshrined in the SSOD-I Final Document.

11. We will have to recognize and address the three key motives that drive States like Pakistan to possess nuclear weapons: one, threats from larger military forces – both nuclear and conventional; two, the existence of disputes with more powerful States; and three, discrimination in the application of international law and norms including the failure of the UN collective security system to guarantee the peaceful co-existence of all States. 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.

12. I reiterate Pakistan’s commitment to the goal of a nuclear weapons free world that is achieved in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner. Pakistan also supports the commencement of negotiations in the CD on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and Negative Security Assurances, as well as on contemporary issues such as chemical and biological terrorism, lethal autonomous weapon systems and cyber weapons.
13. Pakistan shares the widespread concern on the erosion of multilateralism, particularly in the field of international security and disarmament. We see multilateralism as a core principle of negotiations in these areas, which is the only sustainable approach for addressing these issues effectively.

Mr. Chairman,

14. After failing to develop consensus on an equitable and non-discriminatory fissile material treaty, attempts are being made to force progress on this issue outside the CD. The reality is that major differences continue to exist on the objective and scope of the treaty, based on serious security concerns. These cannot be wished away by creative drafting and need to be tackled upfront. Pakistan did not accept the recommendations produced by the ill-advised GGE on FMCT in 2015. Nor do we accept the recommendations from the so-called High Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group.

15. The substantive work on a fissile material treaty must be undertaken in the CD on the basis of a universally accepted mandate that explicitly addresses the asymmetries in existing fissile material stocks and genuinely contributes to nuclear disarmament. We need to reconsider the negative effects on the treaty’s prospects generated by the exercise of discrimination and double standards, manifest in the form of bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements, inequitable waivers, and the continued pursuit of additional country-specific exceptions in multilateral export control regimes.

Mr. Chairman,

16. Progress on CD related issues can neither be achieved by changing the format or forum, nor by imposing solutions that exclude major stakeholders. The challenges to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament need to be tackled on the basis of certain fundamental requirements including:

One, recognition of the right to equal security for all States.

Two, addressing the motives driving States to acquire weapons.

Three, a renewed commitment to universal nuclear disarmament within the context of a re-energized collective security system.

Four, evolving a criteria-based and non-discriminatory approach for promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate safeguards in accordance with respective international obligations of States.
Five, provision of effective guarantees to non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons through the conclusion of a universal and legally-binding treaty in the CD.

Six, addressing concerns arising from the deployment of Anti-Ballistic Missile systems that are inherently destabilizing.

Seven, strengthening the legal regime to prevent the weaponisation of outer space by undertaking negotiations to this effect in the CD.

Eight, as a step towards nuclear disarmament, addressing both the past as well as future production of fissile materials through the conclusion of a non-discriminatory Fissile Material Treaty in the CD.

Nine, bringing Cyber Weapons and Autonomous Weapon under appropriate international regulations and prohibitions.

Ten, addressing regional security issues through dialogue and diplomacy, including the establishment of a Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia; the creation of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East; and a denuclearised Korean Peninsula.

Lastly, pursuing balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, recognizing their direct causal relationship with the continuing reliance on nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

17. Pakistan has positioned itself as a mainstream partner in the international non-proliferation regime. We have instituted a stringent national export control system and a robust nuclear security regime at par with the best international standards, also fulfilling all requirements of Security Council resolution 1540.

18. Pakistan meets the international standards for gaining access to civil nuclear technology for meeting its growing energy needs in a safe, secure and safeguarded manner. Through a series of actions in diverse areas, we have demonstrated our credentials to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group. We expect a non-discriminatory expansion of NSG's membership.

Mr. Chairman,

19. Pakistan is party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. By banning entire categories of WMDs, we value the contribution of these two instruments to international and regional security. Pakistan is actively engaged in strengthening both these regimes.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.