Statement

by

Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, Minister, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations,

at

the First Committee’s Thematic Debate on Disarmament and Regional Security

at

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Mr. Chairman,

Global peace and security depends, in large measure, on stability at the regional and sub-regional levels. Instability at the regional and sub-regional levels spawns arms races and undermines the international community’s efforts aimed at arms control and disarmament.

On the other hand, at times states engaged in a bilateral process of confidence building fail to register progress on arms control and disarmament measures because of the extra-regional concerns of one or both the parties. Such roadblocks can only be removed through effective measures for disarmament and arms limitation at the global level, both in the field of weapons of mass destruction as well as conventional arms.

It is for this reason that in 1993 the United Nations Disarmament Commission recognized that regional and global approaches to disarmament and arms limitation complement each other and both should be pursued simultaneously in order to promote regional and international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Confidence building measures in the realm of security at the regional level have to be tailored to the specifics of the region and should begin with simple arrangements on transparency, openness and risk reduction before the concerned states find themselves in a position to pursue more substantive arms control and disarmament measures. However, regardless of the specifics of different regions and the steps the concerned states undertake for confidence building, the ultimate aim of regional approaches should be to enhance regional and global peace and security.

For this to happen, the regional confidence building measures in the realm of arms control and disarmament should aim at the preservation of a balance in the defense capabilities of states at the lowest level of armaments. This would place a
special responsibility on the militarily significant states and states with larger military capabilities to promote agreements for regional peace and security.

Moreover, regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should give priority to the elimination of the most destabilizing military capabilities and imbalances. It is also imperative to recognize the intrinsic link between strategic and conventional stability. A stable balance of conventional forces is necessary to ensure strategic stability, particularly in tense regions. Massive induction of sophisticated weaponry increases conventional asymmetries and forces greater dependence on nuclear and missile deterrence.

Mr. Chairman,

Confidence-building measures are significant in that they can lead to the creation of favourable conditions for the peaceful settlement of existing international problems and disputes and to facilitate the solution of any situation which might lead to international friction. However, confidence-building measures should not become an end in themselves. They should be pursued in conjunction with earnest efforts for the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and other concrete actions to ease regional tensions and build confidence among the States of the region can create a political environment conducive to promoting agreements on disarmament and arms limitation.

Without progress towards eliminating underlying disputes and causes of mistrust between states, the utility of confidence-building measures will diminish. Confidence-building measures alone cannot act as a substitute nor a precondition for steps towards peaceful settlement of disputes.

Mr. Chairman,

Like the previous year, the delegation of Pakistan has tabled draft resolutions on regional disarmament, conventional arms control and confidence building measures at regional and sub-regional levels. These resolutions recognize the significance of regional approaches to arms control, disarmament and confidence building for international peace and stability and the complementarity between regional and global approaches. We look forward to the consensus adoption of these resolutions by the General Assembly this year.
Mr. Chairman,

In South Asia, we are pursuing a Composite Dialogue process which includes confidence-building measures in the nuclear and conventional fields. A number of confidence-building measures are operational which include establishment of hotlines and agreements on pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles and reducing risk of accidents relating to nuclear weapons. Pakistan believes that it is time to advance from risk reduction to restraint and the avoidance of an arms race. For this purpose we have proposed the establishment of a Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR) in South Asia with three-interlocking elements of a) conflict resolution b) nuclear and missile restraint; and c) conventional balance. The realization of the objectives of the SRR can be facilitated through parallel progress towards the resolution of outstanding disputes in our region.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community has an important role to play in the promotion of regional peace and security in different parts of the world, including South Asia, by:

One, supporting and promoting a comprehensive approach to peace and security and adopting an equitable approach;

Two, avoiding policies that create nuclear disparities and thereby undermine strategic stability in a region;

Three, discouraging the introduction of destabilizing weapon systems, which can lead to an arms race and undermine military balance; and

Four, agreeing on measures for progress in the field of arms control and disarmament at the global level to create an environment conducive for substantive restraint measures in different regions.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.