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Statement by Ambassador Farukh Amil, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva

At the Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons
(13 October 2017)
Mr. Chairman,

The international consensus reached at SSOD-I to systematically pursue nuclear disarmament is breaking down. As the international and regional security environment worsens, the goal of nuclear disarmament 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 constantly shifting the goalposts towards additional non-proliferation measures that are cost-free for their own strategic calculus.

The situation has been further compounded by the exercise of double standards in the application of non-proliferation norms for the sake of political expediency and economic benefits. These discriminatory measures endanger strategic stability in the South Asia region and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

The Conference on Disarmament is a vital and indispensible part of the UN disarmament machinery. It is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Regrettably, it has fallen short of expectations in fulfilling its raison d'être of nuclear disarmament.

It was only a matter of time that the frustration brewing on the slow progress on nuclear disarmament boiled over, giving birth to an initiative launched outside the CD to ban nuclear weapons. However, this initiative faltered by ignoring the fundamental security considerations that underpin nuclear disarmament. While we empathise with the sense of disappointment that propelled its proponents, it only led us to the conclusion that the launch of such initiatives outside the CD, on a non-consensus basis and without all the key stakeholders on board, no matter how well intentioned and justified, would not lead to any real change on ground.

In order to promote a comprehensive disarmament agenda, a rules-based, equitable and non-discriminatory international order needs to be evolved by:

One, addressing the security concerns of all states;

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

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.
Mr. Chairman,

Any arms control, non-proliferation or disarmament treaty that does not lead to undiminished security for all states would be a non-starter — as evidenced by the failure of the FMCT negotiations to kick off. A treaty which only results in a cut-off in the future production of fissile material, as envisaged under the Shannon Mandate, would jeopardize Pakistan’s security and bring no added value to the cause of nuclear disarmament. Pakistan stands ready to consider a treaty that covers the past production of fissile material, and has put forward a detailed Working Paper in this regard in the CD.

Similar to Pakistan’s stance towards the ill-advised GGE established in 2014, Pakistan has again chosen not to participate in the so-called High level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group. The limited and incomplete composition of this Expert Group as well as its divisive genesis, restrictive mandate and partial basis of work does not qualify it for undertaking the task that is being expected from it. We will not be in a position to accept any conclusion or recommendation produced by this Expert Group including any attempt to force its report on the CD.

Mr. Chairman,

A nuclear weapons free world would be less stable and less secure if some countries possess disproportionately excessive conventional military capabilities. Nuclear disarmament, therefore, needs to be pursued in a comprehensive and holistic manner in accordance with the principles agreed upon by SSOD-I.

Pakistan has 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. As recognized by SSOD-I, the objective of this process should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

My delegation was highly pleased with the successful outcome of the 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 the revival of the global consensus on general and complete disarmament while taking into account the security concerns of all states.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of negative security assurances has been on the international agenda for more than half a century. Pending nuclear disarmament, the long-standing and genuine aspiration of non-nuclear weapon states to receive negative security guarantees should be fulfilled. Pakistan, along with a vast
majority of UN Member-States believes that this issue is ripe for negotiations at the CD.

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.