Mr. President,

Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor during your Presidency, allow me to acknowledge your hard work in drafting the Programme of Work (PoW) for the CD. I also wish to acknowledge that you remained completely transparent in your work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for the fair manner in which your predecessor Ambassador Hellmut Hoffmann of Germany carried out his work as the last President of the CD and steered the writing of the CD’s annual report.

Before I proceed further I would also take this opportunity to respond to certain comments already made today. Reference was made to the former Egyptian Ambassador’s statement in the CD about the need to come out of “comfort zones” and need for delegations to show “flexibility”. However, when issues of national security interests are at stake no country has come out of its comfort zone or show flexibility.

With regards to the UNGA resolution on the Conference on Disarmament adopted in the First Committee last year, I would draw the attention of my colleagues to the fact that this resolution called for the CD to establish a “balanced and comprehensive PoW”. For us these words: balanced and comprehensive, means just that. As such, any draft PoW has to be balanced between the different agenda items. The continuing absence of such a balance in fact is the real problem which needs to be addressed.

We held several meetings with you bilaterally and as part of the G-21 in which we tried to explain our concerns to you regarding your draft PoW. As per instructions received from the capital I have also proposed to you certain amendments to the draft PoW which in your judgment would not lead to consensus. We respect your views on this count.

Pakistan cannot agree to direct, indirect or even pre-negotiations on FMCT. We have explained the reasons for this position adequately in our
various statements over the past years. Your draft PoW, in order to achieve balance and be acceptable to all, needs to clearly reflect that it would not lead to direct, indirect or even pre-negotiations on FMCT. Our concerns in this regard are substantiated by the fact that the same language is not used with regard to the other three core issues since some countries are not willing to “negotiate” on Nuclear Disarmament, NSAs or PAROS.

The essence of our security concerns is that there continues to be asymmetry in fissile material stocks in our region and commencement of any negotiations on this issue that does not take into account reduction of existing stocks would pose a serious challenge to our security. This situation has further deteriorated in recent years.

Similarly, our concerns with regard to Shannon Mandate are well known. The ambiguity in the Shannon Mandate may have served a specific purpose when it was negotiated in 1995 but the developments of the past years in our security environment makes it impossible for us to accept the so-called “constructive ambiguity” of the Shannon Mandate.

Beyond issues specific to Pakistan, we have other concerns which we share with the G-21. In this regard, we would like to highlight the merger of nuclear disarmament and FMCT into one Working Group which has been done in a manner that relegates nuclear disarmament in terms of its work and priority.

The notion of FMCT, being the “first step” towards Nuclear Disarmament negotiations is unacceptable to us. Such a hierarchy or prioritization goes against the grain of our national position. This not only equates nuclear disarmament with FMCT but also makes any progress on nuclear disarmament hostage to the conclusion of a FMCT. We cannot accept this.

For these reasons my delegation is not in a position to support the draft PoW before us and we wish to record our opposition to it.

I thank you Mr. President.