

Statement by Mr. Yasar Ammar, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations, New York at the First Committee Thematic Debate on “Regional Disarmament and Security”

(25 October 2016)

Chairperson,

In the post-cold war era, most threats to peace and security have arisen mainly among States located in the same region or sub-region. Therefore regional approaches to disarmament and arms control are both essential and complementary to international and bilateral efforts.

The Final Document of SSOD-I, the UN Disarmament Commission and this Committee’s resolutions have repeatedly reaffirmed the need for simultaneous pursuit of regional and global approaches including agreements in the area of disarmament and arms limitation. The international community has endorsed through these mechanisms and normative framework two well-recognized and tested tools: conventional arms control and confidence-building measures, particularly at the regional and sub-regional levels.

Chairperson,

Several regions of the world have benefitted from the application of principles and guidelines in the areas of conventional arms control and CBMs evolved and agreed at the United Nations.

It is important to recall and reiterate some of these principles including preservation of balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces; the special responsibility of militarily significant states with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional security and pursuit of disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner.

Preventing the possibility of military attack launched by surprise and to avoid aggression remain important goals of conventional arms control. A stable balance of conventional forces and weapons is necessary to ensure strategic stability, particularly in sensitive regions like South Asia.

Pakistan has made numerous proposals for enhancing strategic stability in South Asia. Regrettably none of these have met a favorable response. Our comprehensive proposal for the establishment of a Strategic Restraint Regime includes three interlocking elements of dispute resolution, nuclear and missile restraint, and conventional force balance. Recognizing the complementarity of regional approaches, forward movement on these three issues in a holistic

manner will go a long way in promoting the goals of arms control and disarmament at the global level.

Chairperson,

Over the years, confidence building measures have proven their utility and efficacy in several regions and sub-regions including in the area of arms control, disarmament, and more broadly for international peace and security.

As the General Assembly resolutions and UNDC guidelines have affirmed, CBMs 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.

CBMs are significant in that they can lead to the creation of favourable conditions for more earnest dialogue and diplomacy. However, CBMs should not become an end in themselves. They should be pursued in conjunction with efforts for the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the UN Charter. Without progress towards eliminating underlying disputes and causes of mistrust between states, the utility of CBMs will remain limited at best. CBMs alone can neither act as a substitute nor as a precondition for steps towards peaceful settlement of disputes.

Chairperson,

Pakistan feels privileged to have spearheaded initiatives on regional disarmament, conventional arms control and CBMs at the United Nations for several years now, as a practical expression of promoting these globally agreed goals. Pakistan's traditional three resolutions on Confidence-building measures in the regional and sub-regional context, regional disarmament and Conventional arms control at the regional and sub-regional levels are contained in documents L.14, L.15 and L.16, respectively. They 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 continued support of Member States in the adoption of these resolutions this year as well.

I thank you.