Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Leader of the Pakistan delegation in the General Debate of the First Committee of the 58th UNGA, on 10 October 2003

Mr. Chairman,

It is a great pleasure to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that, under your able guidance, this Committee will achieve optimum results. You can count on our cooperation. I also take this opportunity to express Pakistan’s sincere appreciation for Uganda’s skillful guidance of this Committee last year.

2. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, the new Under Secretary General for Disarmament and assure him of our full cooperation in promoting the agreed goals of disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

3. This Committee’s debate on disarmament is taking place at a difficult moment for the promotion of peace and security. First, there has been serious erosion of principles of the UN Charter, particularly on the question of use or threat of use of force. Second, the concept of “equal security”, approved at SSOD-I, flowing from the “sovereign equality” of states, has been severely damaged. Asymmetry in power, and wealth, is growing – reinforcing the tendency of more powerful states to resort to the use of force and the tendency of the weak to respond through asymmetric means.

4. Equal security was to be promoted primarily through general and complete disarmament – both in the conventional and non-conventional spheres. The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was an interim measure, with the ultimate aim of complete nuclear disarmament; chemical weapons and biological weapons were to be totally banned; and, conventional armaments were to be controlled – especially in the regional context.

5. These objectives have been perverted, if not subverted.

   o Today, general and complete disarmament is dismissed as Utopian;
   o Nuclear disarmament is given lip service especially at the NPT Review Conferences. But in practice, the Nuclear Weapon States display no intention of giving up their nuclear weapons - now or at any time in the foreseeable future. Thousands of nuclear weapons are retained and new war-fighting nuclear weapons are being developed.
   o The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become the primary and urgent goal. But it is pursued selectively. Some states cannot pursue peaceful nuclear cooperation, while others are helped in promoting un-safeguarded nuclear programmes, to build and refine missile and anti-missile systems, and allowed to accelerate vertical nuclear proliferation, including in the regions of tension.

6. While ignoring real nuclear threats – the existence of dangerous disputes among nuclear-armed states – attention is focused on the possible danger of WMD falling in the hands of non-state actors and terrorist groups.

7. Military expenditures have increased. According to the latest SIPRI report, “The current level of world military expenditure is 14% higher in real terms than it was at the post-cold war low of 1998”. Huge and aggressive military arsenals are being built up – often in collaboration – by a few States, while weaker states are often coerced to disarm themselves and to give up the potential for development of any credible means of self-defence.

Mr. Chairman,
8. The Conference on Disarmament and other disarmament machinery is paralyzed – not because of the intransigence of the Non-Aligned countries – but because some major powers are unwilling to allow negotiations to be opened on the issues of highest priority i.e. Nuclear Disarmament. Nor are they willing to address present and future threats to global security emanating from the development of new war-fighting nuclear weapons; the development and deployment of ABM systems; and the on-going weaponization of outer space. All they are willing to negotiate is what they see as threatening their own security i.e. the proliferation of WMD and missile capabilities and, this too, with exceptions and special treatment for their own allies and strategic partners.

9. A huge legal and political dichotomy has emerged in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. While the NPT recognizes only five nuclear-weapon States, there are, today, actually eight, if not nine nuclear-weapon states. This dichotomy needs to be resolved. It can only be resolved in the context of a process of nuclear disarmament by all nuclear-weapon states.

10. And, non-proliferation can succeed only if the underlying security concerns of states are effectively addressed. Unilateral and selective efforts to impose nuclear non-proliferation have resulted in the exacerbation of the proliferation threat, heightened tensions in the regions concerned and increased the danger of the use of force.

11. Presumptions of WMD possession by Iraq, based on questionable intelligence information, have proved to be unfounded so far – demonstrating the danger of the doctrine of pre-emptive and coercive non-proliferation.

12. Unfortunately, these realities are not reflected in the assessments and prescriptions proposed by the major powers, by the “New Agenda” Coalition, or even by the United Nations.

13. It seems essential, therefore, to evolve a new consensus on the entire gamut of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues, based on the principles of the Charter and global agreements, especially the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the first Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament. A partial and self-centred agenda imposed by the major powers is a recipe for increased international insecurity and the continued deadlock in disarmament negotiations.

14. The best approach to disarmament and non-proliferation today, as in the past, would include the following elements:

   (a) Negotiating internationally agreed non-discriminatory treaties and agreements and promoting their observance through specific mechanisms designed for this purpose;

   (b) Removing the underlying security concerns of States which motivate them to seek WMD and other advanced weapons systems;

   (c) Promoting through cooperation, WMD and missile disarmament by the militarily significant states, simultaneously with equitable non-proliferation; and

   (d) Providing incentives, apart from disincentives, for the acceptance and implementation of non-proliferation obligations.

Mr. Chairman,
15. Pakistan reluctantly acquired nuclear weapons and missile capability to deter aggression from our traditional adversary, India, and only after India acquired and tested its nuclear weapons and declared itself a nuclear-weapon State. It is not in Pakistan’s strategic interest to allow the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries.

16. We share the concern that WMD proliferation could destabilize the global security environment, especially in certain sensitive regions of the world. Pakistan is prepared to work as a partner in halting proliferation. However, unreasonable demands for implementing Security Council Resolution 1172 while the existing nuclear weapon states retain their nuclear weapons, are unreasonable, unacceptable and unrealistic. Pakistan’s special strategic compulsions need to be understood and accommodated.

17. While the situation in South Asia is different, Pakistan has committed itself not to erode the basic goals of the NPT. We would be prepared to give an explicit commitment that Pakistan will continue to act in conformity with the obligations, undertaken by the Nuclear Weapon States, under Articles I, II & III of the NPT to prevent any further nuclear proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

18. Consistent with its obligations as a nuclear weapons state, Pakistan has formally instituted an elaborate Nuclear Command and Control Mechanism since February 2000, to bring in place ironclad custodial controls. The National Command Authority (NCA), chaired by the President, oversees these custodial controls of all assets including strategic weapon components and fissile material. These controls are aimed at ensuring total elimination of risks of leakages of either material or technology, and preventing accidental or unauthorized launch. A Strategic Command Force, established in each of the three services, ensures that our strategic weapons are never used unintentionally, accidentally or without due authorization. Further special security and safety measures have also been adopted, which make it impossible for any mischievous or “wrong hands” to attempt a seizure of these assets. We are fully prepared to deal with multi-dimensional threats to our strategic assets at any cost.

Mr. Chairman,

19. Pakistan is a party to the international conventions banning chemical and biological weapons. We are committed to fulfilling our obligations under these conventions fully and faithfully.

20. Pakistan believes that the implementation of the obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) should be achieved through the OPCW in the Hague. For Pakistan, a major priority is to secure the verified destruction of chemical weapons, specially those which India declared when it ratified the CW Convention. Until India’s CW stocks are destroyed, Pakistan shall need to factor the threat of CW attack in any conflict with India. Pakistan also continues to cooperate with international efforts to control the destructive flow of chemical weapons and their precursors.

21. Arrangements to verify the ban on biological weapons have not been formalized despite best efforts by the States Parties. We are willing to work with the concerned states to evolve agreed and non-discriminatory means consistent with the BW Convention to prevent the clandestine development of biological weapons by any State.

22. However, we do not believe that such verification responsibilities for the weapons of mass destruction should be entrusted to the Security Council, because its functions relate mainly to peace and security and the rights and obligations in the Council would be unequal between the P-5 and other States. Such an effort would undermine the credibility of existing treaty regimes. We
should work instead for the strengthening of the disarmament treaties and, where necessary, improve their verification mechanisms, including compliance.

23. Pakistan also shares the global concerns regarding unrestrained ballistic missile proliferation. We are willing to cooperate in evolving universally negotiated, non-discriminatory measures to avert missile proliferation. We have noted the independent initiatives taken on the issue of missiles such as ICOC. A considerable number of so-called “missile active” states are still outside its fold. Pakistan cannot accept discriminatory restraints especially those not accepted by our neighbour India, or those which would prevent Pakistan from ensuring the credibility of our deterrence posture.

Mr. Chairman,

24. Pakistan understands the concerns regarding the threat of the acquisition of WMD by terrorist groups. In this context, the universal acceptance and implementation of the IAEA’s Convention on Physical Safety is important. Programmes to ensure protection of “loose nukes” and of inadequately protected fissile materials are useful. Pakistan has taken all possible national measures to ensure the safety and security of our nuclear/missile assets. We are prepared to participate in the elaboration of internationally agreed measures to prevent terrorists from gaining access to WMD. Pakistan, therefore, proposes convening of a meeting of the technical experts, dealing with WMD, to evaluate the reality of this alleged threat.

25. Our deliberations should also focus on the fact that threats of terrorists acquiring chemical and biological weapons are relatively much greater than of acquiring nuclear weapons. The OPCW can be strengthened to address the CW threat. On biological weapons, special arrangements could be considered pending finalization of a multilateral agreement.

Mr. Chairman,

26. Pakistan desires the early resumption of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament – the sole multilateral forum mandated to negotiate and conclude, on the basis of consensus, legally binding arms control and disarmament instruments that contribute to the maintenance of peace and security at the minimum level of armament on the basis of undiminished and equal security for all states. The following four issues should constitute the core agenda of the Conference on Disarmament:

First: nuclear disarmament: Negotiations on this priority item cannot be frozen out of the CD’s work programme indefinitely. The NPT nuclear-weapon states are committed to the elimination of nuclear weapons. This commitment needs to be operationalized.

Second: Outer Space must be effectively insulated from an arms race and weapons of mass destruction. Negotiations on this issue are also important to remove the current gridlock in the CD.

Third: Conclusion of a universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and verifiable Fissile Material Treaty (FMCT) – which will be an instrument of both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Fourth: Conclusion of legally binding international instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states. Such an instrument could be another confidence building measure in providing credible guarantees against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
27. In the event that other issues are brought on the negotiating work programme of the CD, Pakistan would seek priority for “Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels”, on which the General Assembly has repeatedly asked the CD to formulate principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control.

Mr. Chairman,

28. We are encouraged to note that the Programme of Action on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons is in the process of implementation. Pakistan is committed to prevent illicit trade in arms. So far, we have succeeded in confiscating 260,000 weapons and the drive is still underway.

29. We are encouraged to see that work within the framework of the Certain Weapons Convention (CCW) is progressing satisfactorily. We appreciate the importance of eliminating the irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines and halting the annual toll of thousands of innocent victims. We propose the adoption of a comprehensive and global programme of action for mine clearance to which Pakistan is prepared to make a substantial in-kind contribution.

Mr. Chairman,

30. We appreciate the desire and interest of the international community to preserve and strengthen peace and security between Pakistan and India. Pakistan has proposed the adoption of a Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR) for South Asia, compromising three interlocking elements:

- **First**: agreed and reciprocal measures for nuclear and missile restraint to prevent deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons;
- **Second**: establishment of conventional arms balance as a confidence building measure between the two countries; and
- **Third**: establishment of a political mechanism for resolving bilateral conflicts, especially the core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir.

31. It should be a matter of grave concern to the international community that there is no operational understanding between India and Pakistan for the “management” of their nuclear relations. India has announced, and is steadily implementing its dangerous “Nuclear Doctrine” envisaging the development and deployment of a “triad” of nuclear weapons on land, sea and air. The Prithvi short-range missile is deployed; the Agni series is in the process of being deployed. The Brahmos naval cruise missiles and nuclear-capable submarines being acquired by India will create a second-strike capability. While professing adherence to the “no-first-use” of nuclear weapons, India’s doctrine provides that: “in the event of a major attack against India or Indian forces anywhere by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons”. The acquisition of
ABM systems and advanced early-warning systems – such as the Israeli-supplied Phalcon – will increase India’s first-strike options.

32. Pakistan does not wish to enter into a nuclear or strategic arms race with India. But we will take all necessary measures to ensure the credibility of our strategic deterrence against any use or threat of use of force against our territory or our strategic assets or facilities.

33. To preserve the stability of strategic deterrence in South Asia, Pakistan’s proposals for reciprocal nuclear and missile restraint deserve urgent consideration. These proposals include:

   **One:** a bilateral moratorium on further nuclear weapons testing;

   **Two:** maintenance of nuclear weapons on de-alert status. As a matter of policy, Pakistan presently does not keep its missiles mated with nuclear warheads;

   **Three:** non-deployment of nuclear capable ballistic missiles;

   **Four:** formalization of the understanding to provide prior adequate notification of flight tests of missiles;

   **Five:** acceptance of a moratorium on the acquisition and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems;

   **Six:** other confidence building measures to reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons by miscalculation or accident; and

   **Seven:** discussion of each other’s nuclear security doctrines to avoid a regional nuclear and missile arms race.

34. The second element of the Strategic Restraint Regime is the maintenance of a balance in the conventional weapons. India’s defence budget has increased almost 100% over the past 5 years, while Pakistan’s has remained frozen. India’s arms purchases will amount to over $100 billion over the next tens years. The provision of certain advanced weapons systems to India, such as Patriot-3 anti-missile systems, the Israeli Phalcon AEW aircraft and the Green Pine Radar and Russian nuclear submarines, threatens to erode the conventional balance. We, therefore, urge India’s arms suppliers to exercise self-restraint.

35. A conventional arms imbalance will increase the threat of Indian aggression against Pakistan. Indian political and military leaders already talk about ‘limited war’, hot pursuit and preemptive strikes against Pakistan. Almost all of India’s military forces and assets are deployed permanently against Pakistan. A conventional imbalance will also lower the nuclear threshold in South Asia.

36. Pakistan proposes the following reciprocal measures in the conventional field to preserve strategic stability:

   - Maintenance of an acceptable ratio in the armed forces of India and Pakistan;
   - Restrictions on the induction of heavy weapons within certain border zones;
   - Further limits on the size and deployments in military exercises;
   - Explicit renunciation of dangerous concepts like limited war, surgical strikes, or hot pursuit;
• Ensuring that neither country has the capacity to launch “surprise attacks”;
• An understanding on non-deployment of ballistic missiles;
• Non-acquisition of weapons systems that could destabilize the strategic balance in the region, especially Missile Defense (MD);
• An eventual agreement on the non-use of force or a non-aggression pact.

Mr. Chairman,

37. Finally, for durable peace in South Asia, it is imperative that a serious and sustained political dialogue should be conducted in a composite fashion to resolve the underlying causes of conflict and confrontation. An early solution to the Jammu & Kashmir dispute holds the key to peace and security in South Asia. On 24 September, 2003 in the UN General Assembly, President Musharraf proposed an action plan for peace between India and Pakistan – including (a) opening of a bilateral dialogue, (b) a reciprocal ceasefire along the Line of Control, (c) cessation of violence within Indian-occupied Kashmir by Indian forces and Kashmiri freedom fighters, (d) enhanced monitoring of the LoC on both sides, and (e) the maintenance of arms balance, both conventional and unconventional, between the two countries. Unfortunately, India summarily rejected Pakistan’s action plan. For peace, we hope that India would yet reflect and respond positively to the constructive proposals of the President of Pakistan.

38. The international community must encourage such a positive response – for the sake of justice and human rights of the Kashmiri people; for the sake of peace and security in South Asia; for the sake of the noble goals of global disarmament and non-proliferation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.