



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent
Representative of Pakistan to the UN at High-Level Plenary
Meeting to Commemorate and Promote the International Day
for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
(26 September 2023)**

Mr. President,

Let me at the outset thank you for convening today's High-Level meeting on the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

2. We also extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General and President of the General Assembly for their remarks.

3. We are meeting at a tense and pivotal moment in modern history. Conflicts rage in Ukraine and in 50 other places around the world. Tensions between the two most powerful States have continued to escalate. We are witnessing new and expanding military blocs; a comprehensive arms race; erosion of long-standing arms control agreements; the development and deployment of huge arsenals of advanced conventional and strategic weapons, including modernization of huge nuclear arsenals; and doctrines which envisage the use of conventional weapons despite the danger of nuclear escalation.

4. The danger of nuclear war is today closer than it has been since the Cuban missile crisis. The goal of the weapons free world has further receded from realization. The largest nuclear powers have failed to fulfill their disarmament obligations. The global consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation visibly eroded.

5. This commemoration serves as a poignant reminder of the urgency of building a consensus to cooperatively advance the goal of nuclear disarmament and comprehensive international and regional security.

Mr. President,

6. Pakistan remains committed to the goal of a nuclear weapons free world, achieved in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner, addressing regional and global challenges, and conventional and non-conventional asymmetries and assuring undiminished security for all States, at the lowest possible level of armaments, as agreed by SSOD-I.

7. In South Asia, nuclear weapons capability was introduced by one state in 1974. That state also initiated the South Asia nuclear weapons explosions in 1998. Pakistan was compelled to follow suit in order to restore strategic stability and deter the aggression against it.

8. Following the South Asia nuclear tests, Pakistan proposed the establishment of a Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR) in South Asia. The SRR is premised on three interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements: conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint and conventional arms balance. The proposal remains on the table. Pakistan's security policy continues to be defined by restraint and responsibility and avoidance of a mutually debilitating arms race in our region.

Mr. President,

9. Pakistan strongly supports all international efforts that seek to promote fair and equitable solutions to disarmament and non-proliferation challenges. Discriminatory approaches, double standards and selectivity in the application of global norms not only weaken global disarmament efforts; they also undermine the non-proliferation regime and the international order based on the principles of the UN Charter and International Law.

10. Meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament can only be achieved by reduction of great power tensions; strict adherence to the UN Charter; universal implementation of Security Council resolutions; elimination of the root causes of conflicts, and the equitable control of all armaments, their deployment and use to ensure "equal security for all States ... at the lowest possible level of armaments".

I thank you.