**Statement by Pakistan at the Eighth CTBT Ministerial Meeting:**

**CTBT@20 – Time to finish what we started**

**(21 September 2016)**

**Chairpersons,**

Let me begin by recognizing the extraordinary efforts of the members of the Group of Friends of CTBT for organizing the Eighth CTBT Ministerial Meeting and also thank the Secretary General and the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO for their remarks.

On the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), we stand at a crossroads, with many unanswered questions. An important question in this regard is: will the hegemonic designs of a few states be allowed to delay the achievement of a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing – a ban that will prevent further development of nuclear weapons, leading to a positive impact on global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

**Chairpersons,**

CTBT continues to be the primary mechanism for ending nuclear weapons testing. Pakistan participated actively in the negotiations that led to the finalization of the CTBT in the Conference on Disarmament. We also voted in favour of CTBT when it was transmitted to New York for adoption in the UNGA in 1996.

Pakistan’s longstanding support to the First Committee annual resolution entitled “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty” is a testament to our commitment to the objectives of the treaty.

Pakistan is an accredited Observer State of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). We have participated in that capacity in Article XIV Conferences convened to facilitate entry into force of the CTBT as well as in the CTBT Ministerial meetings.

**Chairpersons,**

Our support to the objectives and purposes of the Treaty is not limited to theory alone; we have actually demonstrated it including by undertaking that we would not be the first one in South Asia to resume nuclear testing. This is not an ordinary commitment and clearly shows our desire for maintaining peace and stability in the region despite compelling regional security dynamics accentuated by the acts of some States. Moreover, we have maintained a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing since 1998.

These commitments further testify our resolve to support treaty’s objectives and purposes.

Since introduction of nuclear tests in our region in 1974, we made several proposals for keeping South Asia free of nuclear weapons and missiles. None of those proposals met a favourable response.

Pakistan has recently reiterated its willingness to translate the unilateral moratorium that Pakistan has maintained since 1998 into a bilateral arrangement on non-testing with India. We hope for a positive response to this proposal.

**Chairpersons,**

The lofty claims made by some regarding commitments towards non-proliferation objectives are belied by their support for exemptions in deviation from established non-proliferation standards and norms. This dichotomy is self-defeating as this would neither serve the objectives of non-proliferation nor further the cause of universalization of the Treaty.

We may be able to recall that a golden opportunity was wasted in 2008 to integrate CTBT as one of the non-proliferation benchmarks while granting a country specific exemption to the NSG Guidelines.

It is indeed unfortunate that we still see a propensity for selective exemptions on the part of some on the issue of new NSG membership instead of objective criteria to be applied across the board.

**Chairpersons,**

It is important that in sensitive regions like South Asia, a balanced security environment is maintained. This can be done through the creation of a strategic restraint regime, as proposed by Pakistan, with its three interlocking and mutually reinforcing pillars of nuclear restraint, balance in conventional forces and dispute resolution.

Formalization of our proposal for a bilateral arrangement on non-testing with India will not only contribute towards strengthening regional stability but also further the global efforts aimed at banning of nuclear tests.

**Thank you.**