Mr. President,

I am taking the floor to exercise our right of reply in response to the statement made by Pakistan earlier in the Session.

2. Pakistan has made an attempt to present baseless fabrications and resurrect some of the old and discredited ideas and proposals. This is not new as Pakistan has made it a habit of abusing every single forum including the First Committee and the UN General Assembly. Fortunately, the world sees through its lies and deceit.

3. Our position on these issues is well known and needs no reiteration. India’s security concerns are not confined to a region and, therefore, India has always approached these issues in a global context. Pakistan has also made a number of baseless and unsubstantiated allegations against India, including in relation to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which do not even deserve a response, as they pertain to matters internal to India. As a responsible State, India strictly abides by its obligations under international treaties and needs no lessons from a country which has no credibility.

Mr. President,

4. It would have been better if this country had refrained from making comments on issues that are extraneous to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The CD is not the forum to address bilateral or regional issues as its mandate is to focus on agreements of global applicability. As India has made clear several times, India is opposed to consideration of regional security issues in the Conference on Disarmament.

5. India’s impeccable non-proliferation record is widely recognized, as such I do not need to respond to the baseless remarks by Pakistan. India’s position on the Anti-Satellite Test conducted on 27 March 2019 is a matter of record of this Conference and needs no reiteration.
6. At a time, when we were looking forward to a new start in 2020 for substantive work by this Conference, the statement by Pakistan can only be viewed as unhelpful.

7. This Conference would recall from last year’s proceedings, how this one country has blocked the negotiations on FMCT on several occasions, including in 2009, when the Conference on Disarmament arrived at a consensus Programme of Work under the distinguished Presidency of Algeria, your own country, Mr. President.

8. We urge the Pakistani delegation to avoid bringing up extraneous issues designed to create obstacles in the path of the Conference on Disarmament getting down to serious and substantive work. In fact, we would like to urge this country to live up to its commitment of acting with responsibility, and to demonstrate that commitment by working towards consensus on the CD’s Programme of Work that would allow the commencement of substantive work at an early date, including the negotiation of an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament.

9. We hope that the CD will get down to substantive work at the earliest.

10. The CD has a vast agenda dealing with global issues relating to disarmament and international security and we hope that Pakistan will refrain from misusing this forum and wasting our precious time by bringing issues extraneous to it.

11. Since I have already said, what I need to say, I will not take the floor again and spend any more time on this issue, out of respect for the work of the CD under your able leadership and guidance.

Mr. President,

12. In the best of traditions that my country represents, I would not let the negativity created by Pakistan’s statement in this august body affect us and would like to take this opportunity to pay our sincere tribute to the valuable contributions made by Ambassador Azeez, our distinguished colleague from Sri Lanka. We owe him our gratitude for having successfully steered the work of the CD leading to the successful substantive work conducted in 2018. We will certainly miss his wise counsel and the collegiate spirit in which his delegation participated under his leadership. I wish him the very best for his future assignment.

Thank you.

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