

**Statement under General Debate of the First Committee of the 73rd Session of the UN
General Assembly, Friday, 12 October 2018**

Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you on your assumption of Chair of the First Committee. We assure you and members of the Bureau of my delegation's fullest support in discharging your responsibilities.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is anchored in our Constitution and remains a fundamental pursuit of our foreign policy objectives. This perhaps explains why Bangladesh has usually been one of the first in South Asia to come forward in assuming obligations under all major multilateral disarmament treaties.

We welcome the Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament launched this year with its people-centred approach and specific action points. We thank the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) for tracking the implementation of the action points in a transparent manner. We acknowledge possible difference of views among Member States on certain elements and action points in the Agenda. We would, however, strongly encourage that the Agenda be mainstreamed into the work of the First Committee this year. Bangladesh commits itself to help advance certain aspects of the Disarmament Agenda pursuant to our national priorities.

Mr. Chairman,

Last year, in this Committee, we joined other delegations in calling for dialogue and diplomacy in deescalating the tension and seeking lasting peace and security in the Korean Peninsula. We feel encouraged by the outcomes from the Summit level meetings held so far, and urge all concerned to forge ahead with their ongoing efforts. We must transcend the times of egregious political rhetoric and brinkmanship concerning the repeated nuclear and ballistic missile tests and possible threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In a similar vein, Bangladesh welcomed the Joint Comprehensive Programme of Action (JCPOA) to peacefully and constructively address the Iranian nuclear issue. We urge all parties to JCPOA to remain engaged in order to build on the positive gains made so far, as attested by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We reaffirm the right of all Member States to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh remains convinced that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security can be ensured only by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe this to be the underlying premise of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) that we have signed. We feel encouraged to see the steady increase in the Treaty's ratification.

Bangladesh has consistently supported the call for a Comprehensive Convention on Nuclear Weapons, addressing the entire spectrum of related issues. Pending such development, we have signaled our readiness to exploring other possibilities that can essentially serve as building blocks towards that goal and also complement the existing legal regime, particularly the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We believe that TPNW constitutes such a crucial building block, and should not be undermined by any future legal or normative exercise, unless with the evident purpose of further strengthening its provisions.

Bangladesh commends the work done by the High-level Expert Preparatory Group on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), including the informal consultations it had undertaken with Member States. We hope that the Expert Group's work would help create grounds for the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to be able to commence negotiations on the Treaty. We also look forward to the outcome of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Nuclear Disarmament Verification. All these efforts and initiatives should be directed at the shared objective of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh remains gravely concerned over reports of use of chemical weapons in different parts of world. We reiterate our abiding support to any objective and impartial initiative to investigate such reports, to ensure accountability for those responsible for such reported use, and to decisively work towards eliminating any remaining chemical weapons stockpiles or abandoned weapons. We underscore the importance of upholding the credibility and integrity of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (OPCW).

The chilling prospects of terrorists and other non-state actors seeking and obtaining access to weapons of mass destruction are perhaps becoming more real than previously assumed. With rapid progress in new technologies, including in the domains of artificial intelligence and bio-technology, there is a potential for such threats being further aggravated. It should be considered a priority to further mainstream these issues into our discussions in the First Committee and other relevant fora towards undertaking far-reaching normative exercise. In addition to the Disarmament Agenda, we thank the Secretary General for highlighting some of these issues in his report on the current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts.

Bangladesh takes particular interest in ensuring the application of relevant international law for an open, secure and inclusive cyberspace. We underscore the need for compliance with norms agreed

through inter-governmental processes for regulating responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We recognise the need for developing further norms and standards in this regard with the meaningful participation of all Member States and other concerned stakeholders. The voices and concerns of the developing countries must be factored into such process.

Mr. Chairman,

With our recent launch of a nationally-owned satellite, Bangladesh would have enhanced stakes in preventing an arms race in the outer space. Pursuant to our principled position, Bangladesh would commit to refraining from first placement of weapons in the outer space. While trust and confidence building measures can be useful for preventing weaponization of the outer space, there is no denying the importance of concluding an international legally binding instrument to this effect under the purview of CD.

Bangladesh remains seized with consideration of possible ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), as we continue to explore ways to further improve our compliance with the Treaty provisions. The threats posed by new technologies in manufacturing and reproducing small arms and light weapons should help gear up further international cooperation to prevent such proliferation, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons addressed some of our critical concerns in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

As a nation in development transition, Bangladesh has legitimate interest in advocating for channeling the massive resources deployed for arms build up to deserving priorities of sustainable development and sustaining peace. We would remain committed to the upholding the UN Disarmament Machinery, including through revitalizing the work of the CD. We reiterate the importance of convening the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-IV) for giving further impetus to the disarmament machinery in an evolving and complex global context.

I thank you.
