

Statement under Thematic Discussion on *Nuclear Weapons* in the First Committee of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly Monday, 22 October 2018

Mr. Chairman,

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

Nuclear weapons pose an overriding security threat for the whole humankind. As global awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons expands, we get more and more sensitized about the risks of inadvertent nuclear weapons use due to accidents or miscalculation. The threats of nuclear weapons and related materials falling in the hands of terrorists and other unauthorized actors add to deepening our concerns over the existence of these and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt in our mind that all responsible Member States share a firm commitment to having a world free of nuclear weapons. There are, however, divergences of views on the ways, means and pace of achieving that objective.

Bangladesh subscribes to the notion that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security can be ensured only by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We take note of certain progress over nuclear arms reduction efforts, and yet remain concerned over the sustained and enhanced investments in further improvement, planning and research on nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and related facilities. We reiterate the urgent need for reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons, including through complete de-programming and de-alerting.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh remains committed to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects and considers nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation to be mutually reinforcing. We support the effective implementation of all three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and hope that the 2020 NPT Review Conference would be able to overcome the setback suffered in the preceding one. We appreciate the spirit of engagement witnessed during the Preparatory Committee Meetings.

Bangladesh considers the adoption of the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons earlier this year to be a significant development. Bangladesh considers the Treaty to be a critical instrument in delegitimizing nuclear weapons and thus mitigating the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from their use. It is unwarranted to project the Treaty as a divisive instrument when its avowed objective is to further complement and reinforce the

Nuclear Non—Proliferation Treaty (NPT), particularly its Article VI. We would see merit in including the TPNW as part of the First Committee agenda.

We believe the potential contribution of non-nuclear weapon states to discussions on nuclear disarmament verification should be utilized.

We reiterate our support for commencing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on an effective, non-discriminatory, legally binding and internationally and effectively verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) which includes existing stocks. We thank the High—level Expert Preparatory Group for its work, and particularly for holding informal consultations with the wider membership.

Bangladesh continues to align with other State Parties in advocating the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). We welcome Thailand's ratification of the Treaty and urge the remaining Annex 2 Member States to expedite their ratification. We thank the Executive Director of the Technical Secretariat of CTBTO for his visit to Bangladesh last month.

We remain particularly concerned that the work on a legally binding instrument providing assurances to non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapons states remains hostage to the overall dynamics in Conference on Disarmament (CD). We consider establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and accession to their protocols to be useful interim steps towards securing Negative Security Assurances as well as achieving global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. Bangladesh would remain in favour of sustained deliberations on a Middle East Nuclear Free Zone.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh remains convinced that peaceful uses of nuclear technology with IAEA safeguards and verification regime in place can effectively contribute to our common endeavor to achieve sustainable development. With our foray into nuclear power generation, we attach importance to IAEA standards and technical cooperation on nuclear safety and security. Article IV of the NPT obliges States Parties to cooperate among themselves in the matter of exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge as well as information on peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

Bangladesh regrets that the High-level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament could not be held earlier this year and look forward to its convening soon. We continue to stress the importance of observing 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons with a view to enhancing public awareness about the threats posed to humanity by nuclear weapons. We hope that, through its various related Resolutions, the First Committee would be able to convey a cohesive and forward-looking message on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

I thank you.