

High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament

Address

by

Her Excellency **Sheikh Hasina**
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New York
26 September 2013

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all.

Nuclear Disarmament is a crucial issue for the survival of humanity and of our planet. Today's high level meeting covering this issue is therefore, of utmost importance and I am honored to speak before it. I thank the President, the Secretary General and the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement for organizing it.

Mr. President,

The horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shook the conscience of mankind and led to the adoption by the United Nations, soon after its creation, of its first resolution envisioning a world free of nuclear weapons. Sixty seven years have since passed and the resolution seems as inadequate as ever. Nuclear weapons are still being honed to make them more deadly, and still being stockpiled in large numbers. A suicidal psyche for self-extinction seems to possess a prominent segment of the mankind without any thought of their progeny. We are proud that our Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, like many others, realized this danger and in his historic speech before this Assembly in 1974 appealed to spare the world from the scourge of nuclear war.

We are meeting again today to give ourselves another chance to avoid the catastrophe. Should we move towards a world haunted by the fear of decimation or towards a world of peace, security and socio-economic development enriching human civilization with our ever increasing knowledge and discoveries? We, the 185 non-nuclear weapon countries are unanimous in opting for the latter. Yet a handful of nuclear weapon states, insensitive to the security of the majority, tragically continue to choose the path of destruction. Valuable resources that could feed and provide decent lives to the deprived humanity are still being used to create yet more sophisticated nuclear weapons having power to annihilate the mankind and the world.

Could we for a brief moment ponder on the kind of world that we wish to leave for our children and grandchildren? If we do, a universal and spontaneous response would be to do away with all nuclear weapons, and establishment of a nuclear free world. The Conference on Disarmament deadlocked for decades, could then move forward easily to conclude a non-discriminatory, internationally and effectively verifiable Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, as well as possession of the same. The Conference on Disarmament also take another step to create a universal legal instrument to codify assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. These steps could stop nuclear weapon proliferation and rid the risk of them falling in the hands of terrorists.

Another step should be the establishment, as an interim measure, of nuclear weapon free zones as in South Asia and the Middle-East. These are possible with the ratification by the nuclear weapons states, of the related protocols to all treaties establishing

such zones. These initial steps could be the beginning of diversion of colossal resources for nuclear weapons development and production to eradicating poverty and hunger and ensuring socio-economic development of mankind as a whole. A world of contented and happy people would outright reject the acts of aggression, discover unity in their diversity, and embrace the culture of peace and fraternity. It is in this perspective that Bangladesh has been tabling resolution on the “Culture of Peace” at every UNGA session.

Living in close proximity to three nuclear powers, Bangladesh has good reasons to worry about these vicious weapons. Bangladesh believes that nuclear weapons cannot guarantee ultimate security and peace. These can, on the other hand, be guaranteed by people enlightened through education, socio-economic progress, and preservation of democratic values, and realization of human faculties by peaceful means. There is no doubt that a price has to be paid for the promotion and the maintenance of peace. But, we are convinced that it is much less than that of making nuclear weapons and fighting a war with these, and then going for peace. In this august meeting of world leaders, I would, therefore, urge you all to renounce nuclear weapons, and to seek security and prosperity through empowerment of the people.

I thank you.