



BANGLADESH

Statement by

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Ambassador & Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva & Vienna
at the Thematic Debate (Nuclear Weapons) of the First Committee of the

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Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

As we have mentioned in our general statement, the position of Bangladesh on nuclear disarmament is unambiguously clear. We believe that nuclear weapons don't secure the lives of our people. They only endanger them. We also believe that the sustenance and proliferation of nuclear arsenals impedes the realization of the purposes, and is incompatible with the principles, of the Charter of the United Nations. We are convinced that peace, security and economic and social development are indivisible and thus the pursuit of armament, in particular nuclear arsenals, far from helping to strengthen international security, actually weakens it. We, therefore, have voluntarily opted not to seek them.

Mr. Chairman,

Yet the arms race continues. The nuclear weapons states, insensitive to the security of all others, continue to have faith on nuclear arsenal for their security. Their vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the competition for qualitative refinement and enrichment of weapons of all kinds, to which economic and scientific resources and technological advances are diverted, pose incalculable threat to peace. We must, therefore, urgently seek their total elimination.

Mr. Chairman,

For us, nuclear weapons themselves are the problem, irrespective of who possess them. Nuclear weapons are wrong weapons and borrowing Secretary General's off-quoted remarks 'there can be no right hands for wrong weapons'. We have all along emphasized that disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. Obviously, proliferation of nuclear weapons by new countries, whether a responsible member of the international community or not, is unacceptable. But so is the lack of progress towards the fulfillment of the disarmament commitment by the nuclear weapon states. Both disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and should be pursued in tandem to progress towards the 'path to zero'.

Mr. Chairman,

We have all along maintained that as long as nuclear weapons exist, so do the risk of their use, threat of use and proliferation, and also the risk of their falling into the hands of the terrorists. The only absolute guarantee against the danger of nuclear weapons is, therefore, their total elimination. Till total elimination is a reality, non-nuclear-weapon States have the legitimate right to negative security assurances- assurances against any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them, under any circumstances. The so-called existing provisions of negative security assurances, as claimed by some members, are inadequate. They must be brought under a universal legal instrument. And, the role of the Conference of Disarmament is possibly the right platform initiate negotiation of such a legal instrument. Sadly, the Conference on Disarmament

remains deadlocked for more than a decade now, with no discernible forward movement in the negotiations of a non-discriminatory, internationally and effectively verifiable Treaty banning the production of fissile material (FMCT) for nuclear weapons including existing stocks. We need to overcome this impasse. For that, political will and flexibility from a number of member countries are necessary.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation notes the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as an interim measure till total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes a reality. Such zones should be established where they don't presently exist, including South Asia and the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh continues to remain a staunch advocate of immediate entry into force of the CTBT. 30 days within its adoption, Bangladesh an Annex 2 State, had demonstrated its full faith in the CTBT and was the first from South Asia to have signed the treaty in 1996 and ratified it in 2000. We join the 161 State parties to the CTBT, in urging the 13 countries, which have not yet signed, and 35 which have not yet ratified the CTBT, to do so without further delay. Non-ratification of the CTBT by the remaining eight Annex 2 States remains the only obstacle to the entry into force of the Treaty and to a permanent banning of nuclear tests by anyone anywhere. The universalisation and entry into force of CTBT at an early date would be crucial for attaining our goal of a nuclear weapon free world.

Mr. Chairman,

In a world of finite resources, there is a close relationship between expenditure on armaments and economic and social development. The hundreds of billions of dollars together with the human, technical and technological resources spent annually on the manufacture, maintenance and improvement of nuclear weapons are in stark contrast to the challenges posed by poverty in which two thirds of the world's population live. Realizing the goals of disarmament thus means stopping colossal wastages of scarce resources dedicated to non-productive purposes and freeing valuable resources for saving millions of lives and addressing pressing development needs, and ensuring timely achievement of the MDGs. We therefore reinforce our call for diverting our resources away from nuclear programs to eradicate poverty and hunger and finance development.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that our progress does not lie in making weapons but in making peace through establishing linkages among the peoples. We should promote a culture of peace, rather than a culture of war. All wars, intolerance and conflicts emanate from a mindset of hatred and intolerance and a culture of peace would promote greater understanding among peoples and tolerance of differing views. We need to promote unity in diversity. It is in this perspective that Bangladesh has been tabling a resolution every year on this subject. There may be a cost for the

promotion and maintenance of peace. But it is much less than that of making nuclear weapons and fighting a war, and then making peace.

And finally, Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh lives in a region which has three nuclear powers. Despite living in the shadow of nuclear neighbors, we have unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear- a position that is rooted to and emanates from our constitutional obligation to a general and complete disarmament. Nuclear weapons have no place in our security posture. The only purpose that nuclear power serves to us is its peaceful use under comprehensive IAEA safeguards that may help address key development challenges of many countries. In this regard, Bangladesh, with the assistance and strict supervision of IAEA, has been working on civil and peaceful use of nuclear technology, especially in agriculture, energy and health sectors.

In this debate of First Committee today, my delegation hopes that the world would use nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes and that the aspirations of the peace loving people of the world to see a world free of nuclear weapons will soon be realized.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.