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BANGLADESH

STATEMENT

BY

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AT

**THE GENERAL DEBATE IN THE FIRST COMMITTEE
60TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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PERMANENT MISSION OF BANGLADESH TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Mr. Chairman, allow me at the outset to congratulate you, and the bureau, on your well-deserved election. Your wisdom and dynamic stewardship, I am confident, would lead the work of the Committee to fruition. My delegation also expresses its gratitude to Ambassador Luis Alfonso De Alba of Mexico for his skilful conduct of the Committee's work in the 59th session. Appreciation is also owed to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, the Undersecretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his thoughtful statement.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman, as you might agree, the work of the First Committee in this session has assumed an unprecedented significance for many reasons. The year of 2005 has been a year of successive failures and disappointment as far as our disarmament and non-proliferation agenda is concerned. We need stronger political will and more innovative thinking to arrest this dangerous glide.

It is a huge disappointment for Bangladesh, Mr. Chairman, that the 2005 NPT Review Conference failed to draw a chart for our future course of actions in advancing our common agenda of disarmament and non-proliferation. We have witnessed, with much anguish, how most of the time allocated for the Conference was taken up in procedural wrangling. This unfortunate event has now raised the inevitable question: does failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference mean weakening of our achievements in 1995 and 2000? We do not think so. We simply cannot turn our face on our agreements of 1995 and 2000, adopted by consensus. That would be a substantial step backward and a legally untenable position.

Also in 2005, the Disarmament Commission once again failed to agree on an agenda for its substantive session. So was the case for the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament, which could not agree on its programme of work blocking its substantive work.

As if those were not enough, the High-level Plenary Meeting of 14–16 September 2005, also failed on this very vital front in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is deeply regrettable that we, after months of intense negotiations, could not agree on a common disarmament and non-proliferation agenda or even simply reaffirm our past commitments.

Notwithstanding our dismal failures, Mr. Chairman, it is important that we look forward rather than just wondering how we came about. We believe that lack of political will on the part of some has brought us to this situation of possibly dangerous deadlock. It has certainly made the world a much more dangerous place than ever before.

This regrettable trend in our negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation also demonstrated the urgent need for us to engage in meaningful multilateralism if we are to make any real progress. We agree with the Secretary-General that the multilateral

instruments must be revitalised if they were to continue to contribute to international peace and security. Bangladesh has all along been a strong advocate for establishing supremacy of rule of law and multilateralism in all areas of international relations and more so in the matters of disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that the evidently harmful trend of unilateralism and wilful interpretation of multilateral instruments and international law by some must be reversed.

Mr. Chairman, existing and emerging threats have heightened international concern about weapons of mass destruction. Absence of firm commitment to disarmament, non-compliance with nuclear non-proliferation commitment, existence of clandestine nuclear network and threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists are all ominous signs of impending dangers. We must resume the stalled multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation without any further delay if we are really serious about addressing these threats effectively.

Bangladesh, like many others, considers the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament. We are disappointed that the substantive work of this important body has been stalled for years together. We call upon all to resume substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament in line with the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Bangladesh reiterates its call for convening an international conference with the objective of arriving at an agreement on a phased programme that would provide for elimination of all nuclear weapons; prohibition of their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use; and their destruction. We urge also for concluding a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Bangladesh continues to believe that total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The major players in this field need to demonstrate their political will to move forward and come out of the miserable situation that we are in now.

It is obvious, Mr. Chairman, that the nuclear weapon States have failed to demonstrate any visible progress to accomplish the elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. We wish to remind that the greatest threat to the humanity comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. We must underscore the need to accomplish total elimination of nuclear weapons to save the world from this menace forever. Bangladesh demands reaffirmation of the negative security assurances provided by the nuclear weapon States.

We are concerned that the nuclear weapon States are not only providing more precision capability to the existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons, but are also developing new types of weaponry. Both will have serious and adverse destabilizing consequences. We wish to recall that providing more precision capability to the existing stockpiles and development of new types of nuclear weapons are in contravention with the assurances provided by the

nuclear weapon States at the time of the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The CTBT would have prevented the improvement of existing nuclear weapons and development of new types of nuclear weapons.

We believe that proliferation of nuclear weapons and their acquisition by State as well as non-State actors are real possibilities. Providing more precision capability to the nuclear weapons would only make these weapons more attractive to the terrorists for acquisition and use, bringing havoc for all of us. We cannot allow that to happen. Bangladesh reiterates its firm conviction that the best guarantee against nuclear weapons proliferation continues to lie in their total elimination.

Mr. Chairman, Bangladesh's disarmament and non-proliferation records are, as all will agree, impeccable. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first Annex 2 nation in South Asia to have signed and ratified the CTBT. We are party to almost all disarmament related treaties including the NPT, the CTBT, the CWC, the CCW, the APMT and the BWC. We have also concluded safeguards agreement with the IAEA including the Additional Protocols. These are tangible testimonies to our unswerving commitment towards the goal of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and an eventual elimination.

Mr. Chairman, Article IV of the NPT guarantees the inalienable rights of all States Parties to the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. These are to be without discrimination. Also in conformity with Articles I and II of the Treaty. The NPT thus obliges States Parties to cooperate among themselves in the matter of exchange of equipments, materials, and scientific and technological knowledge and information on peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

We are concerned, however, that undue restrictions on exports to developing non-nuclear-weapon countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes continue to persist through measures incompatible with the provisions of the Treaty. Those barriers must be removed. We are also disappointed that extraneous reasons are being used by some nuclear weapon States to deny the rights of non-nuclear-weapon States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. Bangladesh calls upon all concerned to engage in constructive dialogue in order to implement the provisions of Articles I, II and IV of the NPT in an environment of trust and confidence.

We wish to reaffirm the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities. We consider that any attack or threat of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities will pose a great danger to all. A threat to attack will buttress the perceived need to defend. It will demonstrate the efficacy of weaponization. This is an incontrovertible logic. We can deny that only at our great peril.

We are concerned at the continued development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space. This has further eroded the international climate. Bangladesh

reiterates its call for resumption of work on the prevention of arms race in the outer space in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Chairman, Bangladesh greatly values regional approaches to nuclear disarmament. Confidence-building measures through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones (NWFZ) can contribute significantly to disarmament. We welcome all existing NWFZs and call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, in the Middle East and in other parts of the world. Kathmandu Process needs to be followed to contributing to regional peace and security in Asia and the Pacific. In South Asia, India and Pakistan must relinquish their nuclear option and join the NPT. Israel must do the same in the Middle East.

Armed conflicts and deteriorating law and order situation, Mr. Chairman, have devastating effects on our societies and on our economies. In Bangladesh, a otherwise peaceful society, unbridled flow of small arms and lights weapons through our porous borders and their illicit trade have been significantly frustrating government efforts to improve law and order situation. We, therefore, value the initiatives aimed at curbing such flow of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that the issue of small arms and light weapons, the real weapons of mass destruction causing higher death toll than caused by the atomic bombs in Japan, must be viewed in the overall perspective of peace and security. If we are to stop the perpetuating cycle of violence, we must focus on prevention including through addressing the root causes of violence.

Although our preference had always been for a legally binding document, we are encouraged by the recent agreement reached on the text of a politically binding international instrument to enable States to identify and trace in a timely and reliable manner illicit small arms and light weapons. We look forward to its adoption during the current session of the General Assembly.

We wish to inform the UN membership, with a modicum of pride, that Bangladesh has destroyed all its stockpiles of landmines in fulfilment of her commitment to the international instruments on landmines. We are concerned that a huge number of civilians, particularly women and children, still fall victims to anti-personnel landmines in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. We call upon those States, which have not yet done so, to become parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Land Mines and on Their Destruction. We also urge for providing assistance to landmine clearance operations as well as in rehabilitating the victims.

Mr. Chairman, we are dismayed to learn that the estimated global military expenditures exceeded US\$ 1 trillion in 2004 and were projected to keep rising. This is an extremely alarming situation. We think that most of these expenditures are the result of an unfortunate arms race that is increasingly having negative impact on our development agenda. There is no doubt that there exists a direct relationship between disarmament and development. We urge all countries, particularly the major military powers, to curb their military expenditures and devote part of the resources made available thereby to economic

and social development of the developing countries. Such a move would greatly advance the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Mr. Chairman, it is imperative now that we act. Act decisively and in the right direction. Weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical or biological, have not done any good to this humanity. They have only brought immeasurable sufferings, fear and underdevelopment to the world. Resources have been deployed to devise mechanisms to kill each other rather than to grow and prosper together in a peaceful world. Now it is time that we work for a safer world, a world free of weapons of mass destruction, a world free of nuclear weapons, a world that we hope to be able to bequeath to our generation and to the generations yet to come as our gift to posterity.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.