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BANGLADESH

STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BANGLADESH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT

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

ON

**THE THEMATIC DEBATE ON
NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you. Could I express to the delegations of Pakistan and India our heartfelt condolences at the tragedy that has befallen their Pakistani and Indian peoples when the earthquakes have caused so much damage to life and property! Also to the Guatemalan delegation for the losses sustained in that country due to flood.

Mr. Chairman, we discuss the issue of “nuclear weapons” today on the backdrop of our successive failures over the last couple of years, particularly in 2005. It is generally believed, and with a modicum of truth, that success in nuclear disarmament does not hinge on technical issues. It is a matter of political will. We, therefore, need stronger political will, and more innovative thinking, to move forward on this score.

Failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference is a matter of great concern for all of us. We have missed out on a great opportunity to chart our future course of action to save this world from the scourge of the continued existence and the possible use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons. This should not have happened.

However, we believe that our disagreements during Review Conference have not in anyway weakened our achievements of 1995 and 2000. Those decisions were adopted by consensus. We cannot now simply walk away from those commitments and obligations. We must implement what we agreed upon, particularly the thirteen practical steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of Article VI of the NPT. Those 13 steps continue to be the performance benchmark for the disarmament process.

It is also a matter of great worry for us that deliberations in the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, have been stalling for years together. We reiterate our call to resume its substantive work in line with the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

We need to strengthen our efforts towards both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We can do so through the resumption in the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We also need to agree on the agenda of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, soonest.

It has been a decade now, Mr. Chairman, that we have adopted the CTBT banning nuclear explosions in any environment. It is a matter of deep regret that the Treaty is yet to enter into force. We call upon the remaining 11 Annex 2 States, whose ratification is essential for the purpose, to adhere to the Treaty as soon as possible. Entry into force of the CTBT would be the first essential step towards achieving our desired goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We have participated in the recent CTBTO conference held in New York to express our continued support in its work towards universalization of the CTBT.

We are convinced that that the nuclear weapon States have made little progress in eliminating their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. The destruction of some of the old nuclear warheads has been overshadowed by the provision of more precision in targeting to the remaining ones. There are efforts as well to develop new types of nuclear weaponry. These developments will buttress war-fighting capabilities, and also enhance the propensity for use. This will be extremely destabilizing. Also if possession of nuclear weapons appears to strengthen the sense of security, their acquisition will become attractive. If some have them, and appear to benefit from their possession, others will want them also. This is simple logic, but an incontrovertible one.

We, therefore, call upon the nuclear weapon States to take concrete steps to reduce their nuclear arsenals; also not to develop new types of nuclear weapons. They should act in accordance with their commitment to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, use of such weaponry in their security policies.

Mr. Chairman, Bangladesh has consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first Annex 2 nation in South Asia to have ratified the CTBT. We are also party to the NPT. We have concluded safeguards agreements with the IAEA including on the Additional Protocols.

We believe that regional disarmament arrangements can play a significant role in global nuclear disarmament. We welcome all existing NWFZs. We call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, in the Middle East and in other parts of the world.

Mr. Chairman, the greatest threat to the humanity comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons. It is our conviction that total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It is from this viewpoint that we underline the categorical imperative of the principles of irreversibility and transparency for all nuclear disarmament measures and the need to develop further adequate and efficient verification capabilities. There can be no greater peril to the world than cheating on nuclear issues. This is an irrefutable axiom, on which there can be no debate.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.