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Statement by

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Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations

at the 113th plenary meeting of the General Assembly on “Follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010: Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations [162]”, General Assembly Hall

Mr. President,

May I convey you the appreciation of the delegation of Bangladesh for scheduling this important plenary, which is convened as a follow-up to the High Level Meeting on “revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations”, held on 24 September 2010.

I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. In addition, I would like to dwell on certain core elements from our national perspective.

Mr. President,

The Agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on arms reduction, is an important and positive step, after years of sluggishness in disarmament talks. This is indeed a step in the right direction; but is decidedly insufficient for freeing this planet from the curse of nuclear weapons. We hope that States Parties would seize the moment at this plenary, and it would provide guidance to all of us, including the States which are yet to become Parties, for achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is a democratic, secular and inclusive society. My country, with her impeccable disarmament and non-proliferation record, is committed to the pursuit of universal adherence to the NPT; and also to the CTBT. Bangladesh has unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear by choice. It is the first Annex-2 country from South Asia to ratify the CTBT. We have also concluded the safeguards agreement with the IAEA including the Additional Protocols.

Bangladesh is constitutionally committed to achieving general and complete disarmament. As a demonstration of this commitment, the Parliament of Bangladesh has also adopted a resolution supporting the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The resolution, inter alia, emphasized on the need to implement all the three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)—nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It has also reiterated its support for Article IV of the NPT that guarantees the inalienable rights of all States Parties to the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without
discrimination, and in conformity with Articles I and II of the Treaty, under the IAEA safeguards and verification mechanism. The Bangladesh Parliament, in its unanimous opinion, also expressed the belief that any use of nuclear weapons would constitute an international crime, including crime against humanity, crime against peace, war crime and genocide. The Government of Bangladesh fully supports this Parliamentary resolution.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh steadfastly supports a multilateral approach to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We believe that the CD is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We also support the work of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC), which is the sole specialized, deliberative body within the UN multilateral disarmament machinery.

We believe that weapons of mass destruction pose the gravest threat to mankind. We continue to hold that only a total elimination of nuclear weapons can provide the guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons; also against the danger of these weapons falling into the hands of terrorists.

Bangladesh is convinced that in addition to electricity generation, peaceful uses of nuclear technology with IAEA safeguards and verification regime, may help tackle some old as well as contemporary development challenges that we confront, including hunger, disease, natural resource management, and climate change. It is disconcerting to note that undue restrictions on exports of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes to developing non-nuclear-weapon countries continue to persist through measures incompatible with the provisions of the Treaty. These barriers must be removed.

Mr. President,

It is a matter of concern that the nuclear weapon States are not only adding more precision capability to the existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons, but are also developing new types of weaponry. We stress that non-nuclear states parties to the NPT have a legitimate right to receive unconditional assurances from the Nuclear Weapons States that the latter will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them.

Mr. President,
Bangladesh also views the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda from a development perspective. Our conscience can not justify about one and a half trillion dollar expenditure a year on armament when the developing countries, particularly LDCs like Bangladesh, are struggling to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Full implementation of the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, including nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, is critical to achieve this goal.

Mr. President,

Let me reiterate that all this notwithstanding, we have not lost faith in ourselves. While we acknowledge that our journey towards a nuclear-weapon-free world would not be easy, we do not believe that difficulties should deter us from beginning our quest for a nuclear-weapon-free world— for ourselves and for our children. We must leave behind a planet habitable for our future generations. Let us resolve to make a difference today.

I thank you, Mr. President.