



BANGLADESH

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Statement by

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Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
at the General Debate of the First Committee of the
68th Regular Session of the UNGA
10 October 2013

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Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the First Committee for the 68th UNGA. We look forward to a productive session under your able leadership. You can count on Bangladesh delegation's fullest cooperation in discharging your responsibilities.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, I would like to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

As a responsible member of the international community, Bangladesh is committed to general and complete disarmament- a commitment that flows from our constitutional obligation to disarmament. Our contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security through participation in the UN peacekeeping and peace building efforts have been widely recognized. We are also the signatories to all major multilateral disarmament treaties, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

We are dismayed to see the near deadlock in the UN-led global, multilateral disarmament diplomacy. The only ray of hope is the conclusion of the arms trade treaty, which is expected to stop the menace of illegal trade of conventional weapons. Our commitment to disarmament is manifest as our Prime Minister signed the treaty on 26 September 2013 as the first country from South Asia. We would like to ratify the treaty as soon as the necessary internal formalities for our ratification are complete. We hope that the treaty would soon enter into force to put an end to the illegal trade in and illegitimate use of conventional weapons that continue to fuel violence, fan existing conflicts, and exact heavy human and humanitarian costs, affecting lives and livelihood of civilians of many regions.

Mr. Chairman,

As we have mentioned time and again in different disarmament fora, nuclear disarmament is a crucial issue for the survival of humanity and of our planet. That nuclear weapons cannot guarantee ultimate security and peace to humanity has been our firm conviction. Unfortunately, a handful of states, insensitive to the security of the majority, sadly continue to possess or seek to possess these wrong weapons to secure them. 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. To these handful nuclear weapons states, we urge to ponder for a brief moment that while they spend more than US \$105 billion each year for researching and testing new nuclear arsenals, only an average US \$50 billion per annum would be sufficient to halve poverty for nearly 5 billion people of this world and meet all eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

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 being fallen in 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. Unfortunately, the existing provisions of negative security assurances, if there are any, are inadequate. They must be codified into a universal legal instrument. As an effective interim measure, I would like to underscore the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. Such zones should be established where they don't presently exist, including South Asia and the Middle East. In this regard, I urge all Nuclear-Weapon States to ratify related protocols to all treaties establishing such zones, withdraw any reservations or interpretative declarations incompatible with their object and purpose, and respect the de-nuclearization status of these zones.

Mr. Chairman,

When the United Nations was founded in the mid 40's of the last century, the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki so strongly shook our conscience that the very first resolution this august body adopted envisioned a world free of nuclear weapons. Sixty seven years have elapsed since the adoption of that resolution. Unfortunately, mankind today, as it was then, is still confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of nuclear weapons sufficient enough to destroy all lives on earth. Time has now come to conclude a comprehensive convention that will ensure the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. Many world leaders expressed this view during the first ever high level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013. In this regard, Bangladesh fully supports the proposed follow up NAM resolution on the high level meeting that includes the provision of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapon, among others.

Mr. Chairman,

We are legally bound by our constitutional commitment not to rest until the ultimate guarantee of a total elimination of nuclear weapons is secured. We remain convinced that nuclear weapons, nuclear deterrence or honing of nuclear weapons have no place in our nation security or foreign policy architecture. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

Following five decades of struggle against nuclear testing, the CTBT was humanity's first silver lining towards a comprehensive globally verifiable non-proliferation regime banning any and all nuclear explosions. 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.

Bangladesh continues to remain a staunch advocate of immediate entry into force of the CTBT. We join the powerful voice of 185 non-nuclear States and the 161 State parties to the CTBT, in urging in the name of humanity, all 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,

The Conference on Disarmament (CD), the so-called "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community", remains deadlocked for decades now wasting valuable resources and time. The last time the Conference agreed to negotiate was in 1996 for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly but has yet to enter into force. Ever since, the CD remains stagnated and is unable to undertake substantive work mostly as a result of vested interests of a few member states. There is also 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. This must end. Pragmatic interventions are necessary to ensure that the CD upholds its legitimacy and credibility by breaking out of its current stalemate, and engaging into substantive work.

Mr. Chairman,

With accession to Protocol V and amended Article one, Bangladesh has now fully acceded to the Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) protocols. Bangladesh remains committed to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) regime and attaches importance to the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention, with focus on confidence building measures. As a State Party to the Ottawa Convention, Bangladesh calls for putting an end to the inhuman and unauthorized use of anti-personnel landmines.

Bangladesh attaches great importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Immediately after the ratification of CWC in 1997, Bangladesh submitted necessary declaration regarding the chemical weapons and their production facilities. To meet the obligations of CWC, "Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act 2006" was passed by the Parliament and following that Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention (BNACWC) was established. We believe that the use of chemical weapons anywhere by anyone, whether state or non-state actors, is unacceptable and any breach of international norm against the use of chemical weapons must be condemned. The recent events relating to the use of chemical weapons have reinforced more than ever the urgent need for the complete destruction and elimination of all chemical weapons stockpiles in the world as soon as possible.

Bangladesh considers the outer space as a common heritage of mankind and calls upon the major space-faring nations to avert weaponization of the outer space. We believe that the CD should make progress in this critical area by building on the constructive work done so far.

Mr. Chairman,

Pursuing disarmament through multilateral engagement has historically been difficult. As the challenges of disarmament and international security become increasingly complex and intertwined, we must learn to make multilateralism work to create a more secure world. It is our sincere hope that our collective endeavor here in the First Committee will contribute to revitalizing the UN disarmament machinery and sustaining international peace and security through effective arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.