Statement by Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Director General (United Nations), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka, Bangladesh at the Thematic Discussion Segment of the First Committee of the 62nd UNGA on the issue of ‘Nuclear Weapons’
New York, 17 October 2007

Mr. Chairman,

Our meeting today on the issue of nuclear weapons takes place against the backdrop of multiple setbacks in the recent years.

The disappointing outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the failure to reach a common agreement in the World Summit and the continued impasse at the Conference on Disarmament have forestalled progress on the nuclear disarmament issue.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite years of relentless efforts by the international community, nuclear weapons still pose the greatest threat to humanity. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We must ensure full universality of the NPT, CTBT and other international instruments without any single exception.

The 1968 NPT, signed by almost all countries of the world, provides a guarantee that while the non-nuclear nations would forgo building nuclear weapons, the nuclear nations would gradually relinquish their own nuclear weapons. Ironically, the lack of political will of only a few continue to cast shadow over the prospect of making the world free of nuclear weapons.

Bangladesh strongly believes that all the three main pillar of NPT – disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy should receive non discriminatory attention. In this context, we wish to underscore that, article IV of the NPT guarantees the inalienable rights of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. These guarantees must apply without discrimination, and the rights of non-nuclear-weapon States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology must be upheld. As a confidence building measure, the nuclear weapons States must also provide binding guarantees to the non-Nuclear Weapons States against the use of nuclear weapons or the threat of using them.
Mr. Chairman,

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) would soon mark its eleventh anniversary of adoption. Although it has achieved near universal adherence with 176 signatories, yet regrettably to date we do not have sufficient ratifications for its entry into force. We would urge the remaining 11 Annex 2 States, whose ratification is essential for entry into force, to do the same at the soonest.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh strongly believes in regional approaches to nuclear disarmament. Confidence-building measures through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones (NWFZ) can contribute significantly to this goal. We welcome the creation of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ) by five Central Asian States. We appreciate all other such existing NWFZs and call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, in the Middle East and in other parts of the world. We also believe that the recent trend of bilateral agreements on civilian use of nuclear energy should not, in any way, hinder the cause of regional nuclear disarmament. We also call for universal access to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreed and Additional Protocols, as these have had so far a deterrent effect on nuclear proliferation.

Mr. Chair,

It is our expectation that the Conference on Disarmament will soon begin negotiation towards an agreement on complete elimination of fissile materials used for production of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman

In spite of the disappointing outcome in the recent past, we are nonetheless heartened to see some glimmers of hope. We are confident that, given the will, it is possible to build on the outcome of the First PrepComm for 2010 NPT Review Conference held in Vienna earlier this year. We would however need to reinvigorate our efforts in right earnest to ensure the Treaty’s continuing relevance and strength.

Mr. Chair,

In the face of these realities it is with deep sense of pride that Bangladesh can point out her own impeccable disarmament and non-proliferation credentials. We have consciously and unconditionally decided 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. We have also concluded safeguards agreement with the IAEA including the Additional Protocols. These are tangible testimonies to our unwavering commitment towards the twin goals of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman

We would never falter in our commitment towards a nuclear weapons free world.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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