Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General of the Conference on Disarmament,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to address the Conference on Disarmament (CD) again. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Egypt, a good friend of Bangladesh, on its assumption of the Presidency of this Conference. I also thank the Secretary General of the Conference for his efforts in taking forward the work of the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

In recent times, we have been witnessing sweeping changes across large parts of the world. Peoples’ aspirations for democracy are finding expression. This optimism, however, is tempered by persisting economic difficulties. As the world dreads a slump into recession, social strife is increasing and development gains are undermined. The world is headed towards a climatic disaster, unless bold decisions are taken and implemented. In the midst of these upheavals and tectonic shifts, disarmament seems like an island in splendid isolation, tranquil and unaffected. This isolation or tranquility is not a good sign, I am afraid. Change always comes with uncertainty, and if not managed properly can generate unrest and insecurity that may potentially affect all of us.

Mr. President,

When we look around the world, we see that states are engaged in expanding their arsenals with more and more lethal weapons, spending billions of dollars for producing and upgrading WMD and their delivery capacities. In an environment where
many societies are passing through turmoil and uncertainty, the underlying insecurity that it generates can actually be exacerbated by weapons proliferation and transfer.

We therefore, cannot accept that the economic, social or the environmental agenda should only take center stage, putting the disarmament agenda on the back-burner. In fact, they are all inter-dependent. The time to make progress on the disarmament front is therefore critical than ever. Unfortunately, the Conference on Disarmament, where it all should happen, is yet to end its long winter slumber, and take on substantive work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Realizing the goals of disarmament means saving millions of life, freeing valuable resources for addressing pressing development needs, and ensuring timely achievement of the MDGs. We therefore cannot retreat from our journey towards a nuclear weapon free world. This uphill task entails power and security considerations at the highest political level of states. In this regard, Bangladesh, as a responsible member of the international community, is committed to do its part.

Ever since our independence, we have been pursuing the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. One of the fundamental principles of our state policy is the promotion of international peace and security. We are constitutionally committed to general and complete disarmament. In pursuance to this commitment, Bangladesh, as a peace-loving nation, has consistently been advocating against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We have been pioneer in South Asia in adhering to all major multilateral disarmament treaties, including the NPT, the CWC, the BWC, the CCW and the CTBT. Bangladesh’s contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security through our participation in UN peacekeeping and peace building efforts have received widespread appreciation. We are neither a nuclear weapon state nor an arms producer. We have no intention of acquiring WMDs. However, if there were to be a nuclear war in any part of the world, we will be directly or indirectly affected.

Mr. President,

We understand that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee for a peaceful and secure world. Until this is achieved, non-nuclear weapon states have the legitimate right to receive security assurances from nuclear weapon states. Establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs) and accession to their protocols could be useful interim steps towards securing NSAs. We support these initiatives in principle. We must remember that the use of nuclear weapons against any country is a problem of a global nature rather than regional. Bangladesh, therefore,
continues to stress on the need for commencing negotiations on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument for NSAs as a matter of priority.

In pursuing the global disarmament agenda, we see merit in beginning negotiations of a non-discriminatory, internationally and effectively verifiable Treaty banning the production of fissile material (FMCT) for nuclear weapons which will include existing stocks. Like many others, we believe that such negotiations must take place in the CD, as it would bring all nuclear capable states on board.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh shares the view that the outer space is 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.

Bangladesh is a staunch supporter of multilateral approach to disarmament and non-proliferation. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the CD must continue to uphold its legitimacy and credibility by breaking out of its current stalemate, and engage in substantive work. We are a strong believer in CD's continued relevance. We believe that nuclear disarmament issues should be negotiated by this Conference, as it is the only body with membership of all nuclear capable states, rather than looking for alternative arrangements.

In order to end the deadlock and revitalize the Conference, we are appreciative of the work done by the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters for the possible establishment of a Group of Eminent Persons. This is a timely initiative, especially when the UN Secretary General has identified this year as the Year of Prevention. CD certainly has a role in this matter as it holds a key piece of the prevention puzzle. The Conference must therefore re-double its efforts to iron out the differences and start substantive work without delay. In this context, an understanding at the political level will be key to breaking the deadlock. We remain ready to assist the process in any way possible.

Mr. President,

We must recognize the need for making the CD more receptive to the global voices on disarmament by creating greater space for participation by other relevant stakeholders. We note with interest, the call for moving towards a "Global Zero" - a phased, verified elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide.
Bangladesh hopes that the NPT review process will continue to be pursued by the
global disarmament community with a balanced approach. We look forward to
participating in the preparatory meetings leading up to the 2015 NPT Review
Conference. We believe that peaceful use of nuclear energy under comprehensive IAEA
safeguards can help address key development challenges. 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.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh has been the first Annex—2 State in South Asia to join the CTBT. The
universalization and entry into force of CTBT at an early date would be important in
attaining our goal of a nuclear weapon free world. Bangladesh has recently become a
part of CTBT verification system by commissioning of an auxiliary seismic station in the
southern part of the country under CTBTO's international monitoring system (IMS).

The global disarmament agenda must not forget the dangers of small arms and
light weapons. While working for the total elimination of all WMDs, we must continue
our efforts to stop the proliferation of conventional weapons. In this context,
Bangladesh has been following with interest the ongoing efforts to conclude an Arms
Trade Treaty. As a State Party to the Ottawa Convention, Bangladesh calls for putting
an end to the inhumane and unauthorized use of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. President,

I would like to end my statement with a thought that goes somewhat beyond the
Conference, but is relevant in the context of promoting global peace. When we observe
global developments, it is obvious that there is a need for a paradigm shift in
international dialogue on peace and development in order to respond to the emerging
global challenges of the 21st century. With this in mind, our Hon'ble Prime Minister
Sheikh Hasina had presented a 'people's empowerment and peace-centric development
model' in her address to the UN General Assembly in last September. This multi­
dimensional model emphasizes the need for promoting social equity and justice and
unlocking the human potentials of every individual in a world of peace. Bangladesh
looks forward to wider engagement by the global community in this endeavour.

I thank you Mr. President.