Statement by Saida M. Tasneem, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN on Cluster i, at the 3rd PrepComm for the 2005 NPT Review Conference
New York, 30 April 2004

Mr. Chairman,

The goal of nuclear disarmament is essentially embedded in the NPT, as the drafters of the NPT remained fully conscious of the simultaneous and mutually reinforcing progress required in nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. If the aspiring goal of a total elimination of nuclear weapons is to be achieved, some day.

A strong advocate for a total elimination of nuclear weapons as well as of other WMDs as the most effective guarantee to ensuring global peace and security, Bangladesh attaches highest priority to the full, accelerated and irreversible implementation by the Nuclear Weapons States of Article VI of the NPT. This does not in any prejudice our position for an unconditional and non-discriminatory implementation of the NPT in all its aspects by all States parties.

As a non-nuclear weapon State, deeply committed to a general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, we regret to witness the deliberate reluctance of NWSs of fulfilling their legal and moral obligations under Article VI, embodying the very essence of nuclear disarmament. An indefinite extension of the NPT does not, cannot justify the indefinite possession by the nuclear weapons states of their nuclear arsenals. The overwhelming concern about the lack of tangible progress in nuclear disarmament as committed under Article VI is a long-standing one. It is taxing its due toll on various other aspects of the treaty as well as on international peace and security, including perpetuation of threats to non-proliferation, compliance, acquisition by non-state actors or legitimate pressure for ratification on three states blockading its universalisation. As at 2004, the urgency called for under Article VI for negotiations in good faith to 'assure their nuclear aspirations at an early date and to seriously engage in nuclear disarmament, has become a not so important agenda for the NWSs, but an all important agenda only to the non-nuclear weapons states. Rather nuclear weapons are assuming an re-emergent role in national security strategies of certain States rationalizing neo-vertical and horizontal proliferation.
The explicit lack of political will of certain nuclear weapon states to deal with nuclear disarmament continues the stalemate and systematic erosion of the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, the CD. The same stalemate creeps up of late in the Disarmament Commission. As obvious consequences, no progress could be achieved in establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on nuclear disarmament in the CD or in the resumption of negotiations for a non-discriminatory, multilateral, and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The neo-rivalry of nuclear weapons in security policies of certain states precludes in absolute certainty their need of nuclear testing, while the CTBT cannot enter into force pending ratification of certain Annex 2 states. The Moscow Treaty was the only welcome and positive first step towards nuclear disarmament, however, it does not fully compensate for the abrogation of the ABM treaty, nor does it uphold the principle of transparency and verification.

In 2004, therefore, what we have at hand is the good faith, political will and hope secured in 1995 and in 2000 through the agreed adoption of the Principles and Objectives of Nuclear Disarmament and a Programme of Action, the ICJ advisory opinion of 1996, the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament, an all important unequivocal undertaking by the Nuclear Weapons states to accomplish total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in the final document of 2000 RevCon and some limited progress in their implementation. Most of these may be paper commitments as many have slipped but to us these are what we had achieved by consensus taking on board the nuclear weapons States and forms a sound and legitimate basis for forward movement.

Bangladesh therefore, attaches enormous importance to these undertakings and instruments at hand and urges upon all not to allow these achievements slip away in 2005, but to make every innovative and constructive effort to further strengthen these tangibly, to the benefit of Article VI of the NPT. All actions called for in 2000 under the 13 practical steps are all critically important and need specific recommendations towards further progress beyond 2005. We also feel it critically important, for this PreCom to make recommendations to the 2005 RevCon, on the conclusion, on a priority basis, of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to provide security assurances to Non-nuclear weapons states, particularly in view of comprehensive changes in the security policy of certain nuclear weapons possessing countries.
Remaining fully conscious of its solemn obligations under the NPT and CTBT and Bangladesh maintains maximum transparency under the IAEA safeguards agreements and the additional protocol in implementing the NPT. We call upon the NWSs particularly the permanent-5 members of the UN Security Council to shoulder special responsibilities in 2005 in fulfilling their obligations and undertakings towards nuclear disarmament and take due leadership expected of them.

The 2005 RevCon is under close scrutiny of the international community and that makes the mandated task of the 3rd PreCom onerous in living up to its expectation in the all important issues under Cluster I. Unless further concrete measures are recommended by this PreCom on nuclear disarmament, with irreversible and verifiable trigger mechanisms, the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons from the face of earth will remain unrealized. Bangladesh looks forward to working constructively and closely with all to do whatever is needed to march one step forward to that goal.

I thank you.