



BANGLADESH

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STATEMENT

BY

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AT

THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST (DISARMAMENT
AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY) COMMITTEE OF THE
FIFTY EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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PERMANENT MISSION OF BANGLADESH TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. Chairman,

May I congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of Chair of this Committee. Felicitations are also owed to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe on his well-deserved appointment as the Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs. I assure you of Bangladesh's fullest support in your challenging tasks in guiding this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

2003 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament. And yet we had little to celebrate for, last May, as much remains unrealized of what the session aspired for - a general and complete disarmament under effective international control. 2003 has also witnessed the failure of the UN Disarmament Commission to adopt a substantive report following four years of deliberations. No consensus could be achieved on the objectives and agenda of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament. For the last seven years the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament, remains deadlocked over its program of work blocking substantive work, particularly on nuclear disarmament and negotiations of an FMCT.

The very possibility that nuclear weapons can be used represents continued risk to humanity. The global nuclear non-proliferation regime based on the Nuclear non-proliferation Treaty faces unprecedented challenges to its credibility and integrity. While universality in the NPT and the entry into force of CTBT remain unaccomplished, proliferation of nuclear weapons states continue to threaten multilateral efforts for nuclear disarmament.

The world has witnessed some serious setbacks and new threats to international peace and security during the past year. In spite of an unyielding global determination to strengthen counter-terrorism measures, terrorism continues to pose a major threat to international peace and security. While lack of commitment by nuclear weapons states towards a complete elimination of their nuclear weapons remain a prime concern for non-nuclear weapon states, the dangers of use of these weapons by terrorists and non-state actors loom even larger for all. Pre-emptive measures based on perceived national security threats have exposed humankind to one more war. The indelible but disconcerting link between proliferation of WMDs, terrorism and national and global security concerns has already emerged into new security doctrines. Tensions in South Asia between nuclear neighbors, India and Pakistan, continue to remain a legitimate source of concern. For the people of South Asia peace and development remain the genuine aspirations.

Escalating global military expenditure seriously undermine implementation of the international development commitments to rid the world of conflict, widespread poverty, diseases, deprivation and injustice by the next two decades.

It appears that disarmament has gone out of fashion. Major achievements that were recorded in the first half-century of the UN in the area of disarmament, suffer a sad reversal in the new century. The Secretary General in his report on the work of the organization, has expressed concern that 'the body of multilateral disarmament norms has been slowly eroded as a result of weakened international commitment'. 'That there can be no "good" or "bad" proliferation, since any act of proliferation can lead to greater instability in the future'. These comments truly reflect the dismal state of affairs in the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process and concern us profoundly. Last one week's deliberations in this Committee have only reaffirmed such concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

While disappointment remains high at the lack of progress in the various fields of multilateral disarmament, we cannot fail to give due recognition to the multilateral and bilateral disarmament initiatives taken by the international community over the past year. These we hope would contribute greatly to confidence building measures in the current global peace and security environment. Bangladesh welcomes the entry into force in June this year, of the **Moscow Treaty** (Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty) between the Russian Federation and the United States. Even though this treaty would not compensate for the scrapping of the ABM treaty, it was an important development in nuclear disarmament in the context of transparency, verifiability and irreversibility. We welcome the important decision of Cuba and Timor Leste to join the NPT during the past year. These accessions would move the NPT one step forward to its much-sought after universality. We call upon all states that have not yet done so to service humanity by joining the NPT without further delay.

Among other positive developments was the progress made in July, in the first Biennial meeting to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in **Small Arms** and Light Weapon. It afforded us the opportunity to explore possible areas of international and regional cooperation including partnership with the civil society, to effectively implement the Programme of Action at the national levels. Last year also marked the tenth anniversary of the **UN Register** of Conventional Arms. We feel encouraged at the increased participation by member states in the Registrar contributing to greater transparency in armaments. Bangladesh contributes information to the registrar on an annual basis.

We also welcome the successful conclusion in Bangkok last month, of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the **Ottawa Convention**. The growing universal support for eradication of the scourge of landmines sets a unique example of how multilateralism can work when states and civil society work together. We remain hopeful that the expert level work last August for a legal instrument within the framework of the **CCW** to deal with explosive remnants of war, would pave the way for further negotiations during the upcoming States parties meeting next month. Bangladesh endorsed the political declaration adopted at the First Review Conference of the State parties to the **CWC** reaffirming the international resolve for complete elimination of Chemical weapons through effective verification. The launching of the **Hague Code of Conduct** was also a significant step forward in setting international norms to promote the non-proliferation of Ballistic Missiles.

Mr. Chairman, firm in our constitutional commitment, Bangladesh has been at the forefront of contributing to the goal of a general and complete disarmament. Party to almost all disarmament related treaties including the NPT, CTBT, CWC, CCW, APMT, and the BWC, Bangladesh attaches particular importance to the strict adherence, non-discriminatory enforcement and verification mechanisms of these treaties, as the best means to achieve their objectives. For us development is a priority. It is our strong conviction that the Millennium Development Goals can be best achieved against the matrix of disarmament, reduction in military expenditure, devotion of resources for poverty eradication and sustained confidence building measures through international political cooperation.

Bangladesh, therefore, calls on all member states of the UN big and small, rich and poor, to seriously consider the growing negative trends in the area of disarmament and reenergize their efforts to bring renewed vitality towards the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. It should be pursued multilaterally, bilaterally as well as unilaterally. It should be pursued globally, regionally as well as domestically. To this end my delegation would be working closely with others to achieve inter alia the following priorities:

- Revitalization of the **Conference on Disarmament** to reaffirm its legitimacy and credibility as the sole negotiating forum for multilateral disarmament including through demonstration of greater international political will to break the current impasse.
- Renewal and revival of the international commitment towards multilateral disarmament as was evinced in the success of **SSOD-I**.
- Universalisation of the **NPT** and a strict and non-discriminatory enforcement and verification mechanism under the IAEA. Early fulfillment of obligations under Article VI of the NPT by nuclear weapons states. Effective implementation of the 13-step Action Plan adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Strengthening efforts to ensure early entry into force of the **CTBT**, particularly calling upon those countries whose ratification is required in this regard. Renewal of efforts to persuade those countries which have not yet done so to join the NPT. In South Asia **India and Pakistan** must also relinquish their nuclear option and join the NPT.
- Place maximum emphasis on strengthening the **enforcement, monitoring and verification** regimes in respect of all international treaties relating to disarmament and non-proliferation of WMDs. Strengthening international, regional and national **safeguard** measures to ensure that WMDs and related technology do not fall into the hands of terrorists. The best way to achieving this goal however, lies in the total elimination of WMDs.
- Promote **regional disarmament** arrangements by encouraging dialogue and providing continued support to strengthen regional disarmament centers. The Kathmandu Process must be strengthened in contributing to regional peace and security in Asia and the Pacific. The concept of **Nuclear Weapons Free Zones** on the basis of agreements freely arrived at should be pursued in all earnest to cover more regions.
- Renewed efforts to reverse the trend of increasing **military expenditure**, particularly by major military powers. Part of resources made available by implementing disarmament treaties must be devoted to economic and social development of the developing countries. The linkage between peace dividend and creation of a global fund for poverty alleviation should be seriously pursued in this context.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to reiterate Bangladesh's unwavering commitment to actively strengthen disarmament through multilateralism in cooperation with all. We remain ready to work with others to enhance the efficiency and working methodology to revitalize this universal forum under the guidance of the General Assembly. Any reform should of course, represent the concerns of the majority and should essentially aim at realization of disarmament and non-proliferation commitments undertaken each year. We are an ardent promoter of a culture of peace and non-violence for our future generations to save them from the scourge of war. We call upon those who can, to do more to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction. We must remind ourselves that the power of humanity does not lie in the size of its armies or armaments but rather in the strength of its ideas for peace; not in its to ability to destroy but its capacity to build for the future.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.