



BANGLADESH

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**Statement by
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at the General Debate of
the 2007 Substantive Session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission
New York, 10 April 2007**

Mr. Chairman, could I begin by congratulating you on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission, and through you the bureau upon their elections. Felicitations are also owed to the Chairs of the two Working Groups. I am confident that deliberations of the Commission, under your able and skilled stewardship, will find fruition in effective results. I assure my delegation's full support in the proceedings of the Commission's work.

I also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his statement which reflects his deep commitment towards the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation fully endorses the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman, this cycle of the substantive session of UN Disarmament Commission (DC) convenes in the backdrop of multiple setbacks crippling the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. Also as we look back we find the trail of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts beset with major and self-inflicting letdowns. We even regressed on some fronts let alone making new grounds.

However, it is not that everything has been disappointing always. Indeed there have been some flickers of hope, a rarity though. We have seen some modicum of successes in 1995 and 2000. The modest progress made in regard to the application of the IAEA safeguards has been a welcome development. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) last year worked towards an agreed schedule with particular efforts to reflect the security concerns of all states. We recall the productive sessions of DC in 1999. In 2006, the DC succeeded to overcome the impediments that prevented substantive discussions in the two previous years. What we need is to look forward and build on these positive developments.

The best methodology to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation goals is to strive for them in a multilateral framework particularly activating the disarmament machinery in two fronts: the DC and the CD whose works in the recent years have been an acute underperformance. We urge the CD to resume negotiations on a programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and on a verifiable treaty banning fissile material

within a specified framework of time. To retain the credibility of the disarmament machinery we need to deliver some sort of agreement on recommendations based on the two agenda of the DC during its current cycle.

The NPT and the CTBT remain the cornerstones of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We reaffirm the need for full universality of the NPT, CTBT and other international instruments without any single exception. Yet regrettably to date we do not have sufficient ratification to the CTBT for its entry into force. We appeal to the remaining Annex 2 states to ratify it the soonest. It is dismaying how lack of political will of some is eroding the entire NPT regime. We call upon the States parties to the NPT to fully implement the obligations under article VI of the treaty and the commitments of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. We urge the remaining states to join the NPT without further delay.

Bangladesh's disarmament and non-proliferation credentials are, as all will agree, impeccable. Despite having nuclear neighbours we have consciously and unconditionally opted 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, the CTBT. We have also concluded safeguards agreement with the IAEA including the Additional Protocols. These are tangible testimonies to our unwavering commitment towards the goal of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We reiterate our principled position on disarmament and non-proliferation as reflected in the outcome document adopted in the 14th NAM Summit in Havana.

We wish to remind that the greatest threat to humanity comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and use or the threat of their use and only total elimination of nuclear weapons provides the absolute guarantee against this threat. However, we remain deeply concerned at the snail's pace of progress by the nuclear-weapon-States (NWS) to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. True some old warheads have been destroyed. But more alarming is that NWS, instead of disarming, are adding more precision capabilities to the existing stockpiles and developing new weaponry. This enhances the propensity for their use with supposed reduction of collateral damage thereby lowering the nuclear threshold. This is in contravention to the negative security assurances provided by the NWS. We reiterate our call for a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-NWS.

If nuclear weapons are perceived to buttress the sense of security and countries appear to benefit from their possession this will naturally prompt a rush for their acquisition. We reaffirm that possession of nuclear weapons can never enhance safety and security because a nuclear war cannot be won.

In the fragile disarmament and non-proliferation regime, weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists and non-state actors has become real possibilities. Besides, precision capabilities make acquisition and use of these weapons more lucrative to the terrorists which will have serious and adverse

ramifications. We reiterate that the only foolproof measure to prevent terrorists from laying hands on WMD lies in the total elimination of such weapons.

Bangladesh greatly values the regional approach to nuclear disarmament. We appreciate the works of all existing nuclear-weapon-free-zones and call for establishment of more such zones in the troubled parts of the world particularly in the Middle East and South Asia.

Bangladesh reaffirms the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities. It is, however, disconcerting to note the use of extraneous reasons and imposition of undue restrictions by some NWS to deny the non-NWS of their rights to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology. We strongly advocate for unqualified implementation of the provisions of Articles I, II and IV of the NPT to uphold the inalienable rights of all States to the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear activities for peaceful purposes.

Proliferation of conventional weapons, fueling conflicts and claiming colossal death toll each year, is not a lesser threat than that posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Out of this growing concern, Bangladesh reaffirms the importance of practical confidence building measures (CBMs) in the field of conventional arms. CBMs when adopted in a balanced and inclusive manner, has the potential to augment international peace and security by promoting openness, understanding and cooperation and generating trust among states. CBMs, therefore, can contribute significantly in advancing disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

Timing of this session of the DC cannot be more propitious given the fact that it is taking place just before the start of the next NPT review process. Against the dismal state of affairs in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, this presents us yet another opportunity to make amends for our failures. The series of debacles must not deter us. We should seize this opportunity to engage in effective deliberations during this session and come up with positive outcomes to form a concrete basis and reference for the work of the next Review Conference. Furthermore, we have to summon all our good will and political commitment particularly those of the NWS to forge into a genuine collective drive for attaining the common goal of disarmament and non-proliferation.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.