Statement

By

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Counsellor

at the

First Committee of the 63rd Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

on the

The Thematic Debate on
Nuclear Weapons

New York
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Thank you Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on the debate on the cluster of Nuclear Weapons. I take this opportunity to highlight Bangladesh's position on the issue.

Our deliberations in the First Committee are taking place against a backdrop of little progress in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The world has been increasingly facing multiple emerging challenges of economic crises, food scarcity, climate change, natural and man-made disasters. In spite of all these difficulties, we are confronted with the challenge of reduction of nuclear danger. As the difference between the nuclear states and non-nuclear states has kept on growing, we remain concerned for the threats emanating from the nuclear weapons. Total elimination of such weapon is the only absolute guarantee against this threat.

Mr. Chairman,

The failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to produce a consensus outcome was a major setback in recent years. It is worrying that the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations has for years been unable to adopt a substantive Programme of Work. Similarly, its deliberative counterpart, the Disarmament Commission has remained incapacitated by the deep divide among its members. What is lacking in these important UN entities is a political will to move ahead. The will to engage in any fruitful negotiations without setting any preconditions. And political will to ultimately free this planet from the threat of nuclear weapons.

However, we believe that the failure in the NPT review conference does not weaken our achievements in 1995 and in 2000. We must build on those successes. We must implement what we have agreed upon. The thirteen practical steps adopted by the 2000 Review Conference for the systematic and progressive implementation of Article VI of the NPT continue to be the benchmark for the disarmament process. At this point we emphasize the unequivocal commitment by the Nuclear-Weapon States towards total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. We also underscore the implementation of the security assurances particularly the commitment of non-use of nuclear weapons to non-NWS.

Mr. Chairman,

We reiterate our call today that the Conference on Disarmament must resume its substantive work in line with the unanimous conclusions of the International Court of Justice that 'there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith, and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control'. Let me underscore the very words 'good faith' here. Without this
It is difficult to remove the existing inaction and obstruction in the negotiations for nuclear disarmament.

It is regrettable that CTBT has not achieved universal adherence at the 12th anniversary of its adoption. Bangladesh has subscribed to the Ministerial Declaration that was adopted in the recent CTBTO conference held in New York in the sideline of the 63rd UNGA. We expressed our continued support to its work towards universalization of the treaty. Without CTBT entering into force the world is a far less safe place. So we would reiterate our appeal to the nine remaining Annex 2 States whose ratification is essential for entry into force of the CTBT. We would urge upon all others to observe a moratorium on nuclear testing in the meantime.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite calls from the international community, Nuclear Weapon States have demonstrated little will, or progress, towards disarmament. Some old warheads evidently have been destroyed. It, however appears that this is more for modernization rather than the desire to conform to any treaty obligations. Moreover, newer types of weapons are being developed, and precisions are being added to these. Needless to say, these measures enhance the propensity for use, and have serious and adverse destabilizing ramifications. We call on the nuclear states to adhere to the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability while reducing their nuclear arsenals. Bangladesh strongly advocates that everything must be done to prevent acquisition by non-state actors. We urge all to remain vigilant and take safeguards measures in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh has impeccable credentials with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation. We have consciously, and unconditionally, opted to remain non-nuclear. We were the first Annex-2 nation in South Asia to have signed and ratified the CTBT. We are also a party to NPT and have concluded safeguard agreements with the IAEA including the additional protocols. These are we believe, adequate testimonies to our unflinching and constitutional commitment towards the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call for the establishment of more nuclear-weapon-free zones including in South Asia and Middle East. We would like to persuade each and every nuclear state to shun this deadly option, and join the NPT regime. Let us make this world nuclear risk free for your citizens and cars.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.