Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Nuclear weapons pose an overriding security threat for the whole humankind. As global awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons expands, we get more and more sensitized about the risks of inadvertent nuclear weapons use due to accidents or miscalculation. The threats of nuclear weapons and related materials falling in the hands of terrorists and other unauthorized actors add to deepening our concerns over the existence of these and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt in our mind that all responsible Member States share a firm commitment to having a world free of nuclear weapons. There are, however, divergences of views on the ways, means and pace of achieving that objective.

We hear arguments in favour of retaining nuclear weapons in the interest of "strategic stability", and yet see regular cases being made about the alleged actions or designs to undermine any such notion of stability by one actor or the other. Perhaps in parallel measures, we witness the proliferation of a number of exclusive groups or initiatives that tend to prescribe the norms and standards for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, maintaining the so-called prerogatives of the nuclear weapons states.

Bangladesh subscribes to the notion that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security can be ensured only by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We share concerns over the slow pace and progress over nuclear arms reduction efforts, and also over the sustained and enhanced investments in further improvement, planning and research on nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and related facilities. We also recognise the immediate need for reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons, including through complete de-programming and de-alerting.

In the backdrop of the prevailing scenario, Bangladesh considers the adoption of the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons earlier this year to be a significant development. Bangladesh signed the Treaty on 20 September 2017, and considers it to be a critical instrument in delegitimizing nuclear
weapons and thus mitigating the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from their use. It is unwarranted to project the Treaty as a divisive instrument when its avowed objective is to further complement and reinforce the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), particularly its Article VI. We consider the Treaty to be fairly comprehensive and forward-looking, insofar it contains provisions for facilitating eventual joining of nuclear weapons possessing states and independent verification of their nuclear weapons elimination in an irreversible and transparent manner.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh remains committed to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects, and considers nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation to be mutually reinforcing. We support the effective implementation of all three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and hope that the 2020 NPT Review Conference would be able to overcome the setback suffered in the preceding one. We appreciate the constructive spirit of engagement witnessed during the first Preparatory Committee Meeting held in Vienna in May this year.

In this context, Bangladesh reiterates its grave concern over the repeated nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of the relevant Security Council Resolutions. We urge all concerned to help de-escalate tension in the region, and resume dialogue in order to find a lasting solution to this rapidly evolving situation. Bangladesh recognizes the continued critical importance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concluded between the Islamic Republic of Iran and five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany in 2015.

Bangladesh continues to align with other State Parties in advocating the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). We support, in principle, the call for holding annual high-level plenary meetings of the General Assembly to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests on 29 August.

We remain particularly concerned that the work on a legally binding instrument providing assurances to non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapons states remains hostage to the overall dynamics in Conference on Disarmament (CD). We consider establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and accession to their protocols to be useful interim steps towards securing Negative Security Assurances as well as achieving global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

We reiterate the continued relevance of commencing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on an effective, non-discriminatory, legally binding and internationally and effectively verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) which includes existing stocks.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh remains convinced that peaceful uses of nuclear technology with IAEA safeguards and verification regime in place can effectively contribute to our common endeavor to achieve sustainable development. Article IV of the NPT obliges States Parties to cooperate among themselves in the matter
of exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge as well as information on peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We attach high importance to IAEA’s technical cooperation in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, especially in resource-constrained settings.

Bangladesh looks forward to the High-level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in 2018 to review progress with this critical agenda and address misplaced concerns over widening polarization. We stress the importance of observing 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons with a view to enhancing public awareness about the threats posed to humanity by nuclear weapons. We once again extend our felicitations to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

I thank you.