Bangladesh Statement under Cluster-1 segment of the Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Date: 02 May 2019
Venue: TCC, UNHQ, New York

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of NAM and the relevant working papers submitted by NAM.

Nuclear weapons pose the gravest security threat to humankind. The dangers of nuclear weapons and fissile materials falling in wrong hands further deepen our concerns. Yet, nuclear weapons not only continue to exit, they are being modernized, their means of delivery and related facilities being improved. This is an unsustainable condition leading towards self-destruction. We must act together to reverse this situation.

Distinguished Delegates,

We are now at the final lap of our preparation for the 2020 NPT review conference which also marks the 50th anniversary of the treaty’s entry into force. Let us take this opportunity to pause a little and reflect upon where we stand. We must identify common grounds where both nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states can stand together. We must be able to build on our foundational works and significant progresses in the previous review cycles. Indeed, we had setbacks in 2015 and in other review conferences. But those need not overshadow our works in current review cycle.

Mr. Chairman,

There exists a broad consensus that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security can be ensured only by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. But there are divergences of views on the ways, means and speed of achieving that. Bangladesh supports systematic, progressive, verifiable, irreversible, and time-bound nuclear disarmament in line with the spirit of Article VI of the NPT. To this end, we stress on the important role to be played by the IAEA in a transparent and independent manner. We believe the voices and concerns of non-nuclear weapon states in the discussions on transparent, accountable, and verifiable nuclear disarmament have not been adequately heard in the past. We are in favor of more constructive engagements among nuclear and non-nuclear states for practical and effective confidence building measures. We also stress on the urgent need for reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons, halting investments in their research and modernization as well as putting the nuclear disarmament high up in the political agenda.
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 believe the success of NPT depends on effective implementation of all the three pillars in a balanced manner. The fact that NPT has great success on its non-proliferation agenda, but not so much on disarmament front weakens its appeal. We must work together to balance out such gaps by shifting the focus of the NPT more towards its Disarmament commitments.

Bangladesh considers the adoption of the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last year to be a significant development. We are encouraged by the steady progress in the ratification of the treaty. We see merit in TPNW to further complement and reinforce the NPT, particularly its Article VI. TPNW, once entered into force, is expected to offer a great opportunity to move towards nuclear disarmament and delegitimizing nuclear weapons.

We reiterate our call for 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. We thank the High—level Expert Preparatory Group for its work to facilitate the commencement of negotiations and enhance confidence.

We join our voice with vast majority of State Parties in advocating the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and urging the remaining Annex 2 Member States to expedite their signature and ratification. Pending such development, we call upon all States to maintain unconditional moratoria on nuclear weapon testing.

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 have not seen much progress in the 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.

Before I conclude, I would touch upon one undervalued aspect about nuclear disarmament which is about shoring up public opinion against nuclear weapons. The training, capacity building, and awareness building initiatives by various UN disarmament bodies have been traditionally playing an instrumental role in this regard. Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament has rightfully put adequate focus on building partnership, involving youth and women. Observing 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons is also a rallying point to reaffirm our commitment to global nuclear disarmament as well as create public awareness against nuclear weapons.

I thank you.