



## **STATEMENT BY BANGLADESH DELEGATION AT THE 2018 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE UN DISARMAMENT COMMISSION (UNDC) (New York, 02 APRIL 2018)**

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**Madam Chair,**

My delegation joins others in congratulating you on your assumption of the Chair of the 2018 substantive session of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We appreciate the manner you had conducted the preparatory work.

We also thank the UN High Representative of Disarmament Affairs for sharing her insights and for outlining the challenges and opportunities ahead for UNDC's work. We draw inspiration from the progress made by UNDC last year in the area of conventional weapons, following a protracted impasse.

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

We reaffirm the importance attached to UNDC as the sole deliberative body with universal membership to build and foster consensus on critical issues concerning general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament. The increasingly volatile security situation around the world makes a compelling case for reinvigorating the entire disarmament machinery, including for sustaining the renewed interest and momentum generated in UNDC's work.

**Madam Chair,**

Bangladesh subscribes to the notion that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation need to be pursued with matching priority to attain a world free of nuclear weapons. The retention, deployment, modernization and proliferation of nuclear arsenals continue to pose grave threats to the entire humanity and to the maintenance of international peace and security. Any artificial line drawn between nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation would only continue to drive a wedge in our collective efforts to achieve total elimination of nuclear weapons in a complete, transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner.

Bangladesh, therefore, stands in support of any constructive efforts to develop and advance the work on international legal instruments and norms under the purview of the UN disarmament machinery. We reaffirm our support for initiating negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on a Comprehensive Convention on Nuclear Weapons, as envisaged by the General Assembly Resolution 72/251. At the same time, we recall the landmark adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the General Assembly last year, which already stipulated a much-needed comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons in view of their potential catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences.

As a signatory to the Treaty, we urge all Member States to take a pragmatic approach to the instrument and recognize its in-built progressive and inclusive approach to achieving total elimination of nuclear

weapons. We reiterate our conviction that implementation of the Treaty would further strengthen and reinforce the overarching objectives of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including those under its Article VI.

We stress the continued validity of the undertakings espoused by nuclear weapon states during the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. We urge these states to act towards accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations.

We further stress the importance of universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances by nuclear weapon states on refraining from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. This remains a standing priority for us pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

We acknowledge the crucial role played by Nuclear Weapon Free Zones in advancing the twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We underscore the need for all concerned parties to act in good faith to deliver on the consensus decisions adopted in this connection during the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

We support commencing negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices in the CD. In relation to this, we reiterate our call upon CD to agree without further delay on a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work towards embarking on its much anticipated substantive work.

We reaffirm the inalienable right of each Member State to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear energy in compliance with the relevant safety, safeguard and security measures. In our national context, we remain committed to further deepening our existing cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other concerned international partners in enhancing our capacity for such compliance.

**Madam Chair,**

Bangladesh underscores the critical importance of prevention of an arms race in the outer space as a common heritage of mankind. We support the focused attention being given to this issue by UNDC.

We have consistently advocated for commencing negotiations on a legally binding instrument on prevention of an arms race in CD. To this effect, we recognize the draft Treaty titled 'Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects' (PPWT), presented by the Russian Federation and China, as a good basis for taking forward this work. Pending the commencement of such work, we underline the need for adhering to the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space and other relevant disarmament and arms control obligations.

We look forward to the formation and work of the Group of Governmental Experts, mandated by the General Assembly Resolution 72/250, to consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including, inter alia, on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space.

Bangladesh further recognizes the inalienable right of all Member States to exploration and use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. In tandem with our first foray into outer space with the imminent launch of our own information and communication satellite, we are working towards seeking membership in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

**Madam Chair,**

We are confident that, under your able stewardship, this UNDC session will be able to help advance our work in the desired direction. We assure you of our delegation's unstinting support to your work and that of the Working Group Chairs.

I thank you.