

Intervention by H.E. M. Shameem Ahsan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, in the thematic discussion on "Conventional Weapons" in the First Committee of the 70th UNGA, New York, 26 October 2015

Thank you Mr. Chair.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you for successfully steering this thematic discussion on "Conventional Weapons". Bangladesh aligns itself with the intervention made by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM.

Mr. Chair,

Weapons of Mass Destruction, both nuclear and non-nuclear, continue to pose major threat to global peace and security. But it is conventional weapons that seem to stir people's mind with their increasingly deadly effect. Horrific consequences of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) endanger many societies. We believe international consensus on the regulation of conventional arms is indeed the key to ensuring peace and security of millions around the world. This can best be achieved through cooperation, consultation and enhancing mutual trust between Parties.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh considers disarmament as an instrument for enhancing international security. In the area of Conventional Weapons, we are party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its protocols, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (APMBT) and Signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). As a member of the UN Security Council for two terms during 1979-1980 & 2000-2001, Bangladesh reaffirmed her strong commitment to the adherence of international disarmament treaties and instruments. This commitment flows from our constitutional obligations to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Chair,

It is unfortunate that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the only multilateral forum on Disarmament, remains deadlocked since 1996, unable to undertake substantive work. All State Parties are required to demonstrate necessary political will so that a balanced and comprehensive program of work can be adopted and the CD can carry out its noble mandate effectively.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh deplores in strongest terms the use of anti-personnel mines in conflict situations thereby killing, injuring and terrorizing civilian population. As a State Party to the APMBT, Bangladesh has accepted certain obligations, including destruction of existing stockpile, reporting compliance and enacting national legislation banning use, production and transfer of APMs. By the deadline of 1 March 2005, 1,89,227 APMs were destroyed. A total of 15,000 mines of different categories were retained under Article 3 of the treaty for training purposes and specifically to assist and prepare Bangladesh Armed Forces contingents for UN peacekeeping Missions. Bangladesh continues to report annually under Article-7 of the Convention. We call on all non-signatories to join the Convention at the earliest, and the States Parties to adhere strictly to the full implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan. In this regard, we also underscore the importance of extending financial, technical and humanitarian support to landmine clearance operations, rehabilitation of the victims and full access of affected countries to technology and finance for mine clearance.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh is a State Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and presently serving as the President of the Protocol V 9th Conference of the High Contracting Parties. We call upon those Member States who are not yet Parties

to join the Convention and its Protocols. The drafting process of Protocol VI on Cluster Munitions is indeed encouraging. So too is the coming into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in December 2014. As a signatory, we hope that the treaty would put an end to illegal trade in and illegitimate use of conventional weapons. Bangladesh welcomes the outcome document of the First State Party Conference held in Cancun, Mexico in August this year. Still, we support the NAM position that States have the sovereign right to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their components for requirements of security and self-defence. We align ourselves with NAM's call for balanced, transparent and objective implementation of the ATT, in line with the UN Charter and the inherent right of self-defence and security of all states. No unilateral coercive measure should be taken on the transfer of such arms. Already, considerable imbalance exists in the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons between developed and developing world. This needs to be addressed through unilateral disarmament measures by the industrialized countries in order to minimize threats to global peace and security.

Mr. Chair,

Also to correct existing imbalance, military expenditure should be reduced and industrialized nations should lead the effort. Resources should rather be utilized towards achieving economic and social progress of our people. We must work together to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The Goal 16 (Promoting peace and justice) is directly relevant to addressing challenges of disarmament and international security. Multilateralism must play its due role in this regard. Bangladesh remains committed to this endeavour.