

**Speech of H.E. Ambassador M. Abu Zafar to the Ministerial Meeting on  
the Occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CTBT, Vienna, 13 June, 2016**

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H.E. Mr. Lazăr Comănescu, Chairperson of the Ministerial Meeting  
Executive Secretary Mr. Lassina Zerbo  
Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished dignitaries

**Good Afternoon**

My delegation is pleased to see Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Romania Mr. Lazăr Comănescu presiding over the Ministerial Meeting being held on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CTBT and in conjunction with the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the CTBT Preparatory Commission. My delegation has no doubt that the Meeting, with your wisdom, experience and leadership, will be able to put some fresh wind to the accelerating of ratification process of the CTBT by the holdout states.

20 years after the CTBT opened for signature; it's still a great concern for us that the Treaty is yet to enter into force. It's paradoxical that despite it being not a legally enforceable global instrument, CTBT has already achieved significant advances with its core activity- establishment of the verification regime across the globe by way of International Monitoring System (IMS) and of offering capacity building programs to the member states, for which PTS truly deserves our sincere acclamation. As major holdout states have been contributing financially and with technical expertise for the central works of CTBTO, thus demonstrating their commitment to nuclear disarmament, we wish to remain optimistic that the political leadership of those states would soon have a change of heart to become the first country to ratify the Treaty.

Such a situation is principally flawed for over a long period of time in the context that it is encouraging non-state actors, terrorist outfits like ISIL to seek to have nuclear weapons in advancing their agenda designed to impede and reverse the progress the humankind has achieved so far. It will also tend to frustrate the CTBT member states about their commitment towards global peace and security as they see that multilateralism as security construct is faltering to ensure peace, security and well-being of the humankind when it is needed much more than before.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

As we had gone through the pangs of birth of our country by way of fighting the modern military machine, there has been a very hard realization of the fact that security of our nation as well as maintaining global peace and security rests not on the increasing weaponization of the state, but on the economic development and social welfare of the people. We remain unmoved and convinced that nuclear weapons, nuclear deterrence or honing of nuclear weapons have no place in our national security or our foreign policy architecture. We have also been robustly bound by our Constitutional commitment not to rest until the ultimate guarantee and goal of a total elimination of nuclear weapons is secured. Guided by this spirit, 30 days within its adoption, Bangladesh, an Annex 2 State, had demonstrated its full faith in the CTBT and was the first from South Asia to have signed and ratified the Treaty in 1996.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

The undeniable challenge faced by the international community in this century, particularly the developing countries, is to ensure socio-economic progress for their peoples. That has been eminently recognized in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Bangladesh also believes that disarmament and development have an intrinsic and mutually reinforcing link. The finance gap to realizing this huge challenge can easily be addressed if the enormous global defense expenditure could be reduced and resources diverted for this purpose. Only this can eventually ensure peace, prosperity and ultimate security in the world, which security doctrines based on nuclear weapons cannot. We must thus rely on multilateralism to ensure a secured and prosperous world for our children and generations to come. While the Paris Agreement on climate change has been signed in New York by a record-breaking number of countries, today instead of celebrating, let us jump into the work that remains to be done to end nuclear testing and continue on an environmentally sustainable path.

Bangladesh, therefore, continues to remain a strong advocate for immediate entry into force of the CTBT. We join the powerful voice of 187 non-nuclear weapons States and the 164 State parties to the CTBT, in urging in the name of humanity, all 13 countries which have not yet signed and 32 which have not yet ratified the CTBT, to do so without further delay. Only eight countries have held hostage the aspirations of 183 peace-loving countries of the world for a world free from the scourge of nuclear weapons. We must find novel ways to overcome the classic case of lack of political leadership so that CTBT ratification by any of the remaining Annex 2 States can be a “game changer” and trigger a cascade of ratifications. In this context, we further call upon the Prep Commission to explore engaging all such networks as Inter Parliamentary Union, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and like organizations, along with its current approaches, for getting a change of heart of the political forces of these states.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

Twenty years ago, with the signing of the CTBT on 26 September 1996, hopes were high that the world at last seriously headed towards a world free from nuclear weapons. Twenty years on, the upsurge of recent geopolitical tensions produced flawed conclusions about the folly of giving up nuclear weapons, resulting ultimately in languishing political will. The push for talks on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has stalled and the region remains highly volatile. We are no closer to resolving the challenge posed by North Korea. Paradoxically, the overall risks of nuclear war have grown — as more countries in the unstable regions have acquired these deadly weapons, terrorists continue to seek them, and as control and command systems in even the most sophisticated nuclear-armed states remain vulnerable not only to system and human error but, increasingly, to cyber attack.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

Twenty years following the adoption of the CTBT, perhaps an international norm has now developed to perceive nuclear tests as a kind of rouge activity. The few countries that have conducted nuclear tests since 1996 have invariably faced universal condemnation and unanimously-adopted UN Security Council Sanctions. This is a success of CTBT. We want to believe that these States also share our common objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and would like to ensure the universal enforcement of the CTBT as a fundamental pillar to that regime. We must, therefore, continue to support the Article XIV process to facilitate entry into force of the CTBT.

At the same time, we must strengthen advances made by the CTBTO in building a strong verification regime by developing and effectively maintaining a system capable of quickly, reliably and precisely detecting nuclear explosions and suspicious events anywhere, in the air or sea or underground. Bangladesh is happy to have hosted an auxiliary seismic station and would continue to contribute to these parallel processes until the last nuclear testing is permanently stopped for the preservation of humanity and our succeeding generations.

Finally, **Mr. Chair**, we cannot afford to allow continuation of this Limbo about the Treaty taking effect any longer. The threat of nuclear weapon is a real and existential one for us, having three nuclear powers in our close proximity. We, therefore, urge all parties concerned, especially the Annex-2 eight remaining states, to demonstrate their leadership with necessary political will, to take the cause of complete and unconditional disarmament further forward by ratifying the Treaty soonest. The longer we delay its entry into force, the greater the risk that nuclear testing will resume — and that in turn would make non-proliferation much harder to sustain.

I thank you all.