



INDIA
भारत

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Statement by

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Permanent Representative of India to the
Conference on Disarmament

At the
Thematic Debate on Other Weapons of Mass
Destruction

First Committee
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Mr Chairman,

India associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

2. The conventions on chemical and biological weapons are worthy examples of non-discriminatory treaties in the field of disarmament for the total elimination of specific types of weapons of mass destruction. In our view, the success of these conventions can be a model for the future elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The BWC is the very first comprehensive disarmament instrument through which the international community committed itself to eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

4. India remains committed to improving the effectiveness of the BWC and strengthening its implementation, including through legally-binding measures. We continue to place importance on its universalization, and in this regard, we welcome the recent accession by Samoa to the BWC, taking the number of States parties up to a notable 179. India has been contributing financially towards BWC's Sponsorship programme, including this year; and hopes that the implementation of the Programme would contribute towards the universalisation of the Convention. We have also regularly submitted our CBMs, with the latest one submitted this year.

5. Advances in biotechnology, genetic engineering and life sciences, especially in the past two decades, their dual-use nature and easier access to them have increased the danger of proliferation and hostile use of biological warfare agents. The possibility that non-State actors, including terrorists could acquire and use biological warfare agents and toxins, has added a new dimension to this danger.

6. India had actively participated in the Eighth Review Conference held in November 2016, and had submitted a Joint Working Paper with France on measures to strengthen Assistance under Article VII of the Convention as well as a Joint Working Paper with the United States on strengthening the implementation of Article III of the Convention. As part of broader outreach, India had also hosted a Regional Workshop on the Eight Review Conference in cooperation with UNODA and the EU in New Delhi in August last year.

7. We were disappointed that the Conference could not achieve a result commensurate with the challenge. Nevertheless, it is heartening that there is a clear desire to move ahead and, in my capacity as Chair of the 2017 MSP, I look forward to the constructive engagement of all States Parties during our annual meeting in December so that we can deliver successfully on the mandate given to the meeting by the Eighth Review Conference. We also thank Ambassador Molnar of Hungary for his tireless efforts at the Eighth Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The OPCW completes 20 years of its existence this year and we congratulate Ambassador Fernando Arias Gonzalez of Spain on his election as the next DG OPCW by the EC. The success of the Convention is the result of collaborative efforts of the States Parties, the chemical industry, the community of scientists and civil society, working in tandem with the OPCW. The non-discriminatory principles enshrined in the Convention, the commitment of the States Parties and the competence of the Technical Secretariat - all have combined to

rid the world, almost completely, of the existing chemical weapon stockpile. This is, not in the least, to suggest that the world can rest on its laurels. Discovery of new toxic molecules, advancements in deployment and dissemination techniques and emergence of non-state actors are among the important developments that call for greater vigilance and a renewal of our efforts.

9. We welcome the destruction by the Russian Federation of its declared stockpile of chemical weapons, and that too, three years before the deadline. We also welcome the international efforts that paved the way for successful removal of the remaining Category 2 chemical weapons stockpiles from Libya for their destruction abroad.

10. India has the second largest number of declared facilities and receives among the largest number of inspections from OPCW. India has a flawless track record of verification inspections. The provisions of the Convention should be implemented in a manner that does not hinder legitimate activities, especially in countries like India with a large and growing chemical industry.

11. India contributed to international efforts under the UN and the OPCW for destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs). We hope that the remaining task of destruction will be completed in the earliest possible time. We are deeply concerned at the reported use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We hope that the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) will take forward the findings of the Fact-Finding Missions (FFM) and identify the perpetrators.

12. It has been our consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at anytime, by anybody, under any circumstances cannot be justified and the perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Under this cluster, India will be presenting its draft resolution entitled 'Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction', which has enjoyed strong support since it was first introduced in 2002. A large number of co-sponsors of this resolution reflect the continuing concerns of the international community with respect to the risks posed by terrorists gaining access to WMDs and sensitive materials and technologies. The resolution enumerates a number of measures at the national and international level to address this threat. We hope that, as in previous years, the First Committee will adopt this resolution by consensus.

Thank you.