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**Permanent Mission of India
to the Conference on Disarmament**

**Annual Meeting of the State Parties to the
Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**

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Geneva**

Statement by

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Statement by India at the 2012 BWC MSP

Mr. Chairman,

The Indian delegation would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the Chair of the 2012 Meeting of States Parties to the BWC. We appreciate the exemplary manner in which you and your delegation have spearheaded the work of the Convention during the first year of the new inter-sessional programme. We are confident of the success of this meeting under your leadership. You can be assured of the full support of the Indian delegation. We would also like to congratulate the two Vice Chairs on assuming their posts.

India associates itself with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches high importance to the BWC as the first non-discriminatory disarmament treaty which eliminated an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. At the 7th Review Conference, States Parties again reaffirmed the undertaking to never in any circumstances develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain biological weapons in order to exclude completely and forever the possibility of their use.

We reiterate our commitment to improving the effectiveness of the BWC and strengthening its implementation and universalization. We believe this is necessary in view of the new challenges to international peace and security emanating from proliferation trends, including the threat posed by terrorists or other non-state actors seeking access to biological agents or toxins for terrorist purposes. States Parties must ensure that their commitments and obligations under the Convention are fully and effectively implemented.

A central element of the operation of the Convention is compliance by all State parties with their obligations under the Convention. In a multilateral treaty such as the BWC, verification of compliance is critically important for States parties in order to be collectively reassured that the provisions of the Convention are being realized. We believe that only a multilaterally agreed

mechanism for verification of compliance can provide the assurance of observance of compliance obligations by States Parties and act as deterrence against non-compliance.

Mr. Chairman,

We have made a solid start to the new inter-sessional process with extensive discussions on the three standing agenda items and the biennial item at the Meeting of Experts held in July this year. As in the past years the Synthesis Paper circulated by the Chair under his own responsibility has been a useful resource in preparing for this meeting. Our job is to now distill, where possible, common understandings at a policy level on the issues at hand. Keeping this objective in mind let me briefly state India's broad position on the issues to be covered in this meeting.

We welcome the decision of the Seventh Review Conference to include review of S&T developments as a standing agenda item in the current inter-sessional programme. India had presented a Working Paper with this proposal at the Review Conference. We believe that this agenda item provides an opportunity to States Parties to discuss in depth the implications of wide ranging and fast paced developments in biological sciences and technology of relevance to the Convention. An important aspect of these discussions will be how to balance risks and benefits of biological sciences and technology given their dual use nature. The measures taken to mitigate biological risks should be proportional to the assessed risk and should not hamper activities, including international cooperation, necessary for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes.

India has always emphasized the responsibility of States Parties to fully implement their obligations under the Convention and adopt requisite national measures to this end. India has a broad-based regulatory framework to prevent the misuse of biological sciences and technology. We believe that effective national export controls are important in ensuring that biological agents and toxins are used only for peaceful purposes and do not fall into the hands of terrorists. India is committed to maintaining effective export controls matching the highest international standards. We also support assistance for States Parties seeking such support in strengthening their respective national systems for biosafety and biosecurity.

India continues to attach high importance to the full and effective implementation of Article X of the Convention. The BWC State Parties must facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and technology related to the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes consistent with their obligations under the Convention. We look forward to the implementation of the understandings on Article X reached at the 7th Review Conference. While legitimate peaceful uses should not be hampered, India is not in favour of unregulated transfers. In this context, we believe that strengthened implementation of Article III would ensure that the cooperation envisaged under Article X is not abused.

Lastly, we wish to stress that CBMs are an important transparency measure to enhance trust in implementation of the Convention. In accordance with the relevant decision of the 7th Review Conference we should look at ways to increase the number of States Parties making CBMs submissions from the current rate of about 40%. It would not be productive to reopen the debates of the Review Conference regarding the role of the CBMs in the BWC regime. CBMs are not an alternative to an effective multilaterally agreed mechanism for verification of compliance.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, you have provided a good template for organizing discussions in the current inter-sessional programme for implementing the decisions of the 7th Review Conference. It is upto the States Parties to use this opportunity to make further progress in implementation of the Convention. We are ready for active participation in this collective endeavour.

Thank you.