STATEMENT BY Mrs. MARIETA GARCIA JORDAN, DELEGATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, IN THE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. First Committee. 63rd UNGA, 17th October 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

The Cuban delegation fully supports the statement on “Other Weapons of Mass Destruction” by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction continues to be a major threat to international peace and security.

The purpose of all the efforts made by the States in disarmament processes should be aimed at the complete and total elimination of such weapons and the prevention of the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction. Cuba reafirms that all States must comply with their obligations related to arms control, disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all its aspects.

Cuba is State Party to, and strictly abides by all provisions of the international legal instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, such as the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

As a State Party of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Cuba continues to play an active role, urging a balanced focus on its two fundamental pillars: Disarmament, including verification, and Assistance and cooperation. Cuba also supports all action aimed at making the Convention universal.

The report of the Second Review Conference on the Convention, held last April in The Hague, shows in a quite balanced way the States Parties’ positions and concerns, as a result of an arduous negotiation effort. This document constitutes an important tool for the future.

The total destruction of chemical arsenals, according to the time limits extended by the 11th Conference of State Parties, is and will continue to be the most important task for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). So far as these time limits get closer, it will also be important to pay close attention to the design of the future role of OPCW in the international arena. Cuba considers OPCW plays an important role in the promotion of the economic and technological progress of the
States Parties, particularly those less developed. That is why we, along with the rest of the Non-Aligned countries, advocate for the full implementation of Article XI devoted to the full economic and technological development and promotes important actions to carry on with that purpose.

Cuba reiterates its appeal to developed countries to promote genuine international cooperation through the transfer of technologies, materials and equipment for the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. The discriminatory restrictions that some States continue to impose on certain States Parties to the Convention regarding transfers for the peaceful use of chemical agents and materials are totally contrary to the letter and spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The full and effective implementation of the Convention's provisions on international cooperation is vital for the objective and purpose of the Convention as a whole.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba reiterates that any possibility of any use of bacteriological and toxin agents as weapons must be completely eliminated. The follow-up mechanism implemented during the Sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention is, beyond doubts, a useful tool for the exchange of national experiences and a forum for consultation.

However, Cuba believes that the only way to really strengthen and improve the Convention is by means of negotiating and adopting a legally binding Protocol that is effective against the production, storage, transfer, and use of biological weapons. This Protocol should include balanced and broad verification of all articles of the Convention.

Once more, Cuba calls to promote the international cooperation for peaceful purposes, including the scientific and technical exchange and the universal adherence to the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba shares the legitimate international concern at the risk that terrorist groups will acquire weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, it insists that such risk cannot be eliminated through a selective approach that is limited to horizontal proliferation ignoring vertical proliferation and disarmament. If we really want to combat the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists, urgent progress is needed in the area of disarmament, including in the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

A number of initiatives being promoted by groups of countries, including the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), have never been multilaterally negotiated. Rather than helping to resolve the problem, those initiatives are weakening the role of the UN in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all its aspects.
Cuba stresses the need to ensure that no measure adopted by the Security Council undermines the UN Charter, the General Assembly, the current multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba does not possess and does not intend to possess weapons of mass destruction in any form, reiterates its firm commitment to the complete and effective implementation of the relevant legal instruments, and offers its efforts to attain that objective, in the interest of international peace and security. Cuba will continue to be fully committed to the objective of the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction and will contribute as much as possible to the central role of the UN in that regard.

Thank you very much.