STATEMENT
by
H.E. Ambassador Byrganym Aitimova,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan
to the United Nations
at the Thematic discussion of the UN General Assembly First Committee
on Other weapons of mass destruction

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Mr. Chairman,

Kazakhstan joins other countries in reiterating the global commitment to the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which constitutes one of the fundamental policies of my Government and its foreign policy.

My country has in recent years consistently translated international standards into action for accession to major international export control regimes and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In the past, Kazakhstan was a centre of production and testing of nuclear and biological weapons, but after gaining independence, the Government worked on the most difficult task of dismantling and eliminating infrastructure at the Semipalatinsk nuclear weapons test site and production facilities of the world’s largest biological weapons production and weaponization plant in Stepnogorsk.

Kazakhstan signed the Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on 14 January 1993, and ratified it on 24 June 1999, and so possesses no chemical weapons whatsoever. My Government has therefore made many advances in non-proliferation of chemical weapons and chemical safety, closely collaborating with the OPCW and its experts in enacting appropriate national legislation and regulations, complying with the Convention, and building national capacity for the protection against chemical weapons. The Kazakh Ministry of Oil and Gas has organized workshops and meetings for the states of Central Asia on effectively implementing the Convention.

Furthermore, although Kazakhstan is formally not a member of the regime of the Australian Group, considering the large number of successful measures adopted by the country to improve export controls and the transit potential and growth of petrochemical and chemical industries, we are now ready to become a Member State of the Australian Group. The OPCW experts and foreign participants assessed positively the progress made by Kazakhstan in implementing the Convention.

Kazakhstan has new areas of cooperation with many countries with key target goals such as developing expertise to prevent proliferation of biological weapons through a cooperative biological research programme, securing dangerous pathogens and strains by strengthening biosafety and biosecurity at facilities, consolidation of dangerous pathogens at secure central repositories, and the elimination of biological weapons related equipment and infrastructure. We have also developed our capacity to detect, diagnose, and respond to natural and bioterrorist infectious disease outbreaks. We also have worked on developing and testing new molecular diagnostics and therapies to cure diseases endemic to Central Asia.

The people of Kazakhstan, who experienced firsthand the horrifying consequences of weapons of mass destruction, are determined to be at the forefront of the global fight against proliferation of these deadly weapons. We therefore stand ready to an active and significant player in the multilateral action for the disarmament and non-proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.