Statement by Ambassador DB Venkatesh Varma, Permanent Representative of India to the CD

Thematic Debate at the First Committee on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

24 October 2014

Mr. Chairman,

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

India attaches high importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention as examples of non-discriminatory treaties in the field of disarmament for the total elimination of specific type of weapons of mass destruction.

India reaffirms that disarmament is a primary goal of the Chemical Weapons Convention and should remain the priority till the complete destruction of all chemical weapons is achieved. India completed the destruction of its chemical weapon stockpiles in 2009 within the stipulated time frame under the CWC. The remaining possessor States should fulfil their obligations within the shortest possible time. Full effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI is essential for the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention. Universality is also fundamental to the success of the Convention. India has responded positively to request of Myanmar for assistance in completing steps for its joining the Convention.

With a large and growing chemical industry, India has the second largest number of declared facilities. India receives one of the largest number of inspections from OPCW and we have a flawless track record of verification inspections. We believe that the OPCW needs to evolve transparent and objective criteria and modalities for 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.

The use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone must be condemned and the international norm against the use of chemical weapons must not be breached. India contributed to international efforts under the UN and the OPCW for the destruction of Syria’s declared chemical weapon stockpiles.

Mr. Chairman,

India remains committed 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. It is the responsibility of States Parties to ensure that
their commitments and obligations under the Convention are fully and effectively implemented. 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 a deterrent against non-compliance. India shares the widespread interest amongst States Parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention through the negotiation and conclusion of a Protocol for that purpose. India is up to date in its CBM submissions.

India believes that it is critical for the success of the BWC that the commitments and obligations under the Convention are fully and effectively implemented. India continues to attach high importance to the full and effective implementation of Article X of the Convention. We believe that strengthened implementation of Article III would ensure that the cooperation envisaged under Article X is not abused. India has a broad based regulatory framework to prevent the misuse of biological science and technology. We believe that CBMs are an important transparency measure to enhance trust in implementation of the Convention, but cannot substitute a multilaterally agreed mechanism for verification of compliance. As a topical subject, sharing perceptions regarding the ongoing outbreak of Ebola virus may be of interest to all.

Mr. Chairman,

India has strong and law-based national export controls consistent with the highest international standards. India filed its report on UNSCR 1540 in November 2004 and has submitted periodic updates the last being in 2013. India is committed to maintaining the highest international standards with reference to control of chemical, biological and toxin items. In this regard, India has made considerable progress in its engagement with the Australia Group and other export control regimes with a view to seeking full membership.

Thank you.