STATEMENT

by

TURKEY

at

the THEMATIC DISCUSSION

on OTHER WEAPONS OF

MASS DESTRUCTION

of

the First Committee

of the 69th Session of the

United Nations General Assembly

27 October 2014, New York
Mr Chairman,

Turkey strongly believes that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) do not guarantee the security of any country, but rather increase insecurity and instability worldwide. Their mere existence is a threat to international peace; therefore they must be ultimately eliminated so that they are never used again.

Turkey’s clear position towards and its strong support to nuclear disarmament have already been expressed in this room during the relevant thematic session, and I would like to take the opportunity to elaborate on my country’s stance vis-à-vis two particular categories of WMD, namely chemical and biological/toxin weapons.

Turkey is party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), which are important components of the global system against WMD proliferation, and in full observance of its international commitment does not possess or develop any such weapons nor conducts any research on them. Turkey also reiterates its call for a wider adherence to and an effective implementation of these Conventions. We will continue to actively support efforts aimed at promoting the implementation and universalization of these instruments.

Mr Chairman,

The existence of chemical weapons in the world and especially in the Middle East has been a major concern for Turkey, but also for the region itself and the international community as a whole. Unfortunately, chemical weapons were used three times in our immediate neighbourhood in the past three decades. The most recent situation which was revealed in Syria last year remains far from being solved.

The 2nd Report of the Fact-Finding Mission of the OPCW dated 10 September 2014, confirmed that chlorine has been systematically and repeatedly used as chemical weapon in northern Syria. The report also mentioned that there are new allegations, some as recently as August 2014, about the use of chemical weapons in Syria. This substantial information has been submitted to the UN Secretary General by the Director-General of the OPCW as part of his 12th monthly report, and the Security Council members were informed of it subsequently. Given the grim conclusions of the 2nd Report of the Fact-Finding Mission, we believe we are at a critical juncture.

Moreover, the use of helicopters in such attacks as the Fact-Finding Mission unveils based on the testimonies of the victims, is a clear indication of the Syrian regime’s involvement in such attacks.

These findings are clearly in contrast with the initial optimism about Syrian regime’s cooperation with the international community. Bearing in mind the appalling images of the victims of chemical weapon attacks in Syria since last year, Turkey wishes to underline the fact that the job has not accomplished yet, and there must be additional efforts to completely dismantle Syrian regime’s remaining chemical weapons stockpile and weapon production facilities. A premature sense of achievement will certainly mislead the international community.

Turkey associates itself with the declaration made by a number of countries following the last Executive Council meeting of the OPCW on October 10 and now reiterates its call upon the international community that due attention and action must be taken in order to prevent further use of chemical weapons in Syria, which is a clear breach of the CWC and UNSC Resolution 2118 (2013). In this regard, Turkey supports the intention of the Director-General of the OPCW to enable the Fact-
Finding Mission to continue its work and remain determined to sanction those responsible for these horrific acts.

Syrian regime has to fully comply with its obligations under the CWC, the OPCW Executive Decision of 27 September and UNSC Resolution 2118 and demonstrate to the international community that it has fully abandoned its chemical weapons programme. This cannot be achieved while use of chemical weapons continues and new allegations continue to be made.

Mr Chairman,

Turkey also joins to the international community in commending the work done by the OPCW in the process of elimination of chemical weapons in Syria. Under life-threatening conditions the UN and OPCW personnel have made extraordinary efforts to eliminate Syria’s declared chemical stockpiles. This has been a stark reminder of the importance of the universalization and effective implementation of the CWC, as well as the key role that the OPCW plays and its efficiency.

Bearing in mind that the CWC is the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, Turkey will continue to cooperate with the OPCW.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey attaches also great importance to the BTWC, its universalization and full implementation. The spread and transfer of dual-use goods and technology that can be used to produce biological weapons and possibility of them falling into the hands of terrorists are major concerns for the international community. Coupled with other weapons of mass destruction, the fact that those agents are so easy to attain, has made such concerns all the more significant.

Confidence-building measures remain an important instrument to promote the purpose of the BTWC. Although considerably improved, the submission of reports has not increased to a desirable level. CBM reports are valuable tools for mutual understanding and transparency. We should strive to make tangible use of this source of information.

We also believe that scientific and technological developments should also be taken into account. Awareness of the innovations in the life sciences, as well as their implications for the BTWC is necessary to address the complex challenges in this area.

Unfortunately, the Convention lacks a verification regime, as in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which would be a very useful mechanism. We consider that such a mechanism would contribute to the strengthening of the Convention’s effectiveness.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community must continue to do its best to prevent the acquisition of biological and chemical warfare agents by terrorists, other unauthorized actors or even irresponsible States, and for their stockpiles to be destroyed. In this context, the universalization and effective implementation of both the CWC and the BTWC must be a priority. We call on all countries to ratify and implement these two important instruments. We also support the strengthening of the implementation of Resolution 1540, which is a key instrument to prevent the acquisition of WMDs by non-state actors.

In this context, regional approaches that pave the way for eventual universality should be utilized. Turkey has been actively promoting the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction
in the Middle East. We, once again would like to express our disappointment that the 2012 Conference could not be held, and our expectation for it to be convened as soon as possible. We urge all States of the region to participate in it, in a spirit of cooperation and flexibility.

Thank you Mr Chairman.