Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran
at the First Committee’s Thematic Discussion on other Weapons of Mass Destruction

18 October 2016

In The Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

I associate myself with the statement by Indonesia on behalf of NAM.

As a party to all major international instruments banning weapons of mass destruction, the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports all genuine and inclusive international efforts for universalization, full and non-discriminatory implementation, and upholding the authority of such instruments.

At the same time, we stress that all such efforts have to be in strict accordance with provisions of such instruments, and carried out in forums established by them.

As a principled position and along with large majority of States, Iran strongly rejects any attempt by any country, under any pretext, to abuse these instruments for imposing any sort of limitation or restriction to the transfer, to other States parties, of technology, know-how, equipment, material, and goods for peaceful purposes, and accordingly, calls for stopping all such limitations and instead, promoting international cooperation and assistance in such areas.

Mr. Chairman,

Even with the use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq by terrorists in recent years, still Iran is the main victim of these inhumane weapons in the contemporary history. As a result of more than 400 attacks with chemical warfare agents during the imposed war by Saddam against Iran from 1980 – 1988, more than 100,000 Iranian citizens were either martyred or injured, including more than 7000 injuries among civilians as a result of nearly 30 chemical attacks to Iranian cities and villages.

Only in one instance, on 28 June 1987, Saddam’s warplanes unleashed sulfur mustard gas bombs on four residential areas of Sardasht, a town in the northwest of Iran. As a result, more than 130 unprotected civilians have been martyred and almost 5000 injured, who still continue to suffer from long-term
complications. The anniversary of this tragedy is commemorated in Iran as the “National Day for Campaign against Chemical and Biological Weapons.”

Needless to say that Saddam's army could not produce these inhumane weapons without the assistance and support of certain western countries, particularly those with permanent seat in the Security Council.

According to the well-documented evidences, over 450 companies, mostly from western countries, including France, the UK were involved in the development of Saddam’s chemical weapons program. Given that all of those companies were under scrutiny of their governments, they could not transfer chemical weapons precursors to Saddam without their governments’ blessing.

While Saddam and some of his partners, as the major perpetrators of such war crime and crime of genocide, have been properly punished, there remains the punishment of those who contributed to the development of his chemical weapons program.

Despite this painful experience, Iran, by rejecting the use of chemical weapons, did not retaliate for such attacks, and based on its principled positon, strongly supported negotiation and conclusion of Chemical Weapons Convention and was among the first countries that signed and ratified it.

Iran continues to strongly support the full and non-discriminatory implementation, and universality of the Convention. We urge all non-parties, in particular Israeli regime, to accede to this Convention without any further delay.

While the total destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles remains the key objective of the CWC, regrettably, as a result of obvious non-compliance of certain parties to complete the total destruction of their chemical weapons before the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012, the raison d’être of the Convention has seriously been challenged and its credibility has been significantly tarnished. Such non-compliances are a setback in the operation of the Convention and parties in non-compliance with such obligation, shall embark on sustained and accelerated efforts, within the framework of the Convention and its verification regime, for full compliance with their obligations.
We continue to strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. We also continue to assist affected people as we did in the case of use of chemical weapons by terrorists against Iraqi civilians. In this context, we call upon the OPCW Technical Secretariat to expand its efforts regarding the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and its voluntary Trust Fund.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Iran also continues to strongly support upholding the authority and full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Biological Weapons Convention.

While the *Use of Biological Weapons* is contrary to the object and purpose of this Convention, nevertheless, regrettably its provision does not explicitly prohibit it. This, indeed, is a major legal loophole and deficiency that needs to be addressed.

Along with the other parties, who are determined to exclude completely the possibility of the use of biological weapons, Iran strongly calls for ensuring the total ban on the use of biological weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances.

To that end, and in accordance with Article XI of the Convention, which provides for its amendment, during the Eighth Review Conference of the Convention in November this year, Iran would reiterate its proposal for amending the Title and Article I of the Convention.

In this context, we urge all States parties to officially convey, to the Depositories of the Convention, their acceptance of the Convention’s amended Title and Article I.

In the same sense, we strongly support NAM position in calling upon those States that continue to maintain reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, to withdraw them without any further delay.

Taking into account various proposals on BWC-ISU, inter-sessional meetings, science and technology, national implementation and international cooperation and assistance, expected to be made during the upcoming BWC Review Conference, Iran strongly believes that: 1) the most effective approach is a comprehensive one that provides for dealing with all provisions of the
Convention in a balanced manner; and 2) accordingly, the most pragmatic option to strengthen the Convention is through resuming the negotiations of a multilateral legally binding Protocol to the Convention.

Based on this approach, Iran will participate actively and constructively in the deliberations of the BWC Review Conference and remains hopeful that the parties will be able to come up with a balanced and result-oriented consensus outcome that is capable of improving its operation.

In conclusion, I would like to introduce draft decision A/C.1/71/L.59 on “Missiles”, proposed jointly by Egypt and Iran and hope that, like previous years, it will be adopted without a vote.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.