Statement of the Chinese Delegation at the Thematic Discussion on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction at the First Committee of the 74th Session of the UNGA

(New York, 23 October 2019)

Mr. Chairman,

China consistently believes that it is in the common interest of the international community to comprehensively ban and thoroughly destroy chemical and biological weapons, and to promote chemical and biological technologies to benefit the humankind. China firmly stands for the purposes and objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and supports the continuous enhancement of their universality, effectiveness and authority so as to make new contributions to maintaining regional and international peace, security and development.

Mr. Chairman,

The role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is crucial. But recent years have seen some worrying tendencies in the Organization. We call upon relevant States Parties to take a responsible and constructive attitude and act strictly in compliance with the provisions of the CWC in order to seek consensus solutions to major issues in an objective, impartial and professional manner, instead of wilfully resorting to votes or targeting certain countries out of political intentions.

In the final analysis, any effort to resolve the chemical weapons issue in Syria has to be conducive to promoting the Syrian political settlement process and maintaining peace and stability in Syria and the Middle East. China opposes the Decision on the Attributions of Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons adopted last year and believes that the priority now should be regulating the work of the “Investigation and Identification Team” and ensuring that the relevant decision is once again implemented within the CWC framework. In particular, the launch of an investigation should be decided by the Executive Council.
Relevant investigations should comply with the provisions of the CWC and are only for facts-finding purposes. Relevant reports should be submitted to the Executive Council for its consideration and only the Council shall decide on the next moves.

While properly handling hot-spot chemical weapons issues, States Parties should take seriously and ensure the comprehensive, balanced and effective implementation of the CWC. Particular attention should be given to intensifying the process of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles and abandoned chemical weapons (ACW). China and Japan jointly invited an Executive Council delegation from OPCW to visit Harbaling Japanese ACW destruction facility in September this year successfully. China calls upon Japan to continue to make concrete efforts to fulfill its obligations, scale up its input to thoroughly destroy Japanese ACW on time and properly tackle such outstanding issues as the contaminated soil by Japanese ACW. China also hopes that the various parties will strengthened the review and monitoring of the destruction of Japanese ACW while ensuring resources inputs in such areas as destruction verification.

Thanks to the efforts from all States Parties, chemical weapons disarmament has made remarkable progress. However, the job is still unfinished, and chemical weapons disarmament remains a top priority among the objectives and purposes of the Convention. China welcomes the completion of the chemical weapons destruction in succession by the Syrian Arab Republic, the Russian Federation, Libya and Iraq. China expresses its serious concern over the fact that the final extended deadline of April 2012 for the destruction of chemical weapons was not met by a certain possessor State Party. China urges the United States, as the only remaining State Party possessing chemical weapons, to make concrete efforts to fulfill its obligations under the Convention and complete the destruction by the deadline as specified in the Conference of States Parties decision on the destruction beyond the final extended deadline.

China has consistently and earnestly fulfilled its obligations under the CWC. China tops the rank of States Parties in terms of both the number of its declared industrial facilities and the inspections received. China’s assessed yearly contributions to the OPCW have increased by
a big margin, to the second highest among all States Parties. Next year, in an effort to improve regional and international implementation capabilities, together with the OPCW, China will hold a high-level workshop on the CWC Implementation in the Asian-Pacific region. And we look forward to your active participation.

Mr. Chairman,

Currently, biosecurity is increasingly important in the global security governance. The international community should work in concert to further the BWC inter-sessional process, deepen international cooperation in biosecurity and build a global community of shared future for biosecurity.

China has consistently and strictly implemented the BWC, and engaged deeply in the work of the BWC. China supports the negotiation of a legally binding protocol that includes a verification mechanism, so as to promote the effectiveness of the BWC. China has actively promoted the development of a voluntary "Model Code of Conduct for Bio-scientists" under the framework of the BWC, in an effort to effectively tackle the challenges posed by the emerging biotechnology. China has also proposed to establish the “Biological Non-Proliferation Export Control and International Cooperation Regime”, so as to deal with non-proliferation and international cooperation in a balanced manner. Your active support to the Chinese proposals will be much appreciated.

China is now steadily advancing the legislative process on biosecurity and promoting domestic biosecurity governance at the top-level. This past Monday, China's draft biosecurity law was submitted to the National People's Congress Standing Committee for deliberation. China takes seriously the international cooperation on biosecurity and will continue to provide more biosecurity public goods to the international community. China held a side event during the Experts Meeting of the BWC in Geneva on 30th July this year, in a bid to promote the capacity building of biosafety laboratories and exchanges and cooperation in the field of biotechnology. China will hold, once again, the third International Workshop on Biosafety Laboratory Management and Techniques this November in Wuhan with a view to
training researchers from developing countries in the prevention and control of infectious diseases.

China firmly opposes the so-called compliance report published by a certain country, which criticizes irresponsibly other countries’ implementation of the arms control treaties and conventions, including BWC. We urge the country in question to reflect first on its own implementation of and commitment to these treaties and conventions, so as to effectively address the related international concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

China appeals to all parties to work together with a constructive attitude in an effort to push for the unanimous adoption at the First Committee of the current session of the UNGA of a draft resolution on “the Implementation of the CWC”. China hopes that its stances and concerns can be properly reflected in the draft. In the meantime, China will continue to support the adoption at this committee resolutions on “Implementation of the BWC” and “Measures to Maintain the Authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol”.

Mr. Chairman,

Only a couple of days ago, the third Training Course for the UNSCR 1540 Points of Contacts in the Asia-Pacific Region was cohosted by China and the United Nations. Representatives from Asia-Pacific countries, the IAEA, OPCW, NSG, MTCR and other international organizations and regimes participated in the Course.

China solemnly emphasized that proliferation of WMD and its means of delivery constitutes a major challenge for the international community. To tackle such global challenge, it is indispensable to pursue multilateralism under the guidance of the UN and with the solidarity of all UN member states. International non-proliferation regime should be improved by, among other things, establishing an open and inclusive global non-proliferation export control mechanism, so as to ensure that all countries can enjoy the benefits of the peaceful uses of science and technology while promoting the goal of non-proliferation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.