Statement under Thematic Discussion on “Other WMDS” in the First Committee of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, 24 October 2018

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) under this thematic cluster.

We join others in voicing our grave concern over the resurgence of the use or threat of use of Weapons of Mass Destruction involving chemical, biological and radioactive materials. Our concerns are further aggravated by the knowledge of terrorists and other unauthorized non-state actors having used or made attempts to access such WMDs in certain situations.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh remains committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We reiterate our call for universalization of the Convention, and urge the four States that are yet become party to it to expedite their accession. It is critical that while the destruction of declared chemical weapon stockpiles nears completion, sustained vigilance and efforts are ensured to prevent their re-emergence and further proliferation. We also call upon any major possessor state to destroy their remaining stockpiles within a reasonable period of time in a concrete and transparent manner.

We share grave concerns over the reported use of chemical weapons in a number of instances, including in the protracted conflict situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. Bangladesh condemns, in the strongest terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. We believe in principle that those responsible for chemical weapon use must be held accountable. It is indeed worth considering that there has not been any specific mechanism to make that happen. As the Director General of OPCW noted, “Investigations of alleges use of chemical weapons are essential if we are to preserve the core norms of the Convention, its credibility and integrity”.

We believe that the Security Council can and should play an instrumental role in facilitating such investigation and accountability. In the backdrop of unwarranted divisiveness within the Council, it is likely that parallel processes and mechanisms would be created at the expense of a consensus based approach. In this context, we take note of the Decision adopted by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of State Parties on Addressing the Threat of Chemical Weapons Use. We attach importance to constructive deliberation on the issue of universal attribution of chemical weapons attack at the next regular session of the CSP. We stress the paramount importance of allowing the OPCW Technical Secretariat to deliver on its mandates and responsibilities with due diligence and in an impartial manner.

Bangladesh remain particularly alarmed by possible threats of chemical terrorism, and urge State Parties to CWC to work collectively with relevant international organisations to address the threats posed by chemical weapons use by non-state actors. We look forward to effective action in response to the recommendations on the possible implications of latest developments in science and technology on the implementation of the Convention.
We reaffirm the commitment of the Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention to forge ahead with its sound working relations with OPCW. The importance of demand-driven international cooperation for developing countries to fulfil their obligations under the Convention need not be overemphasized.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh remains committed to fulfilling the provisions of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), and shares concern over the advances in biological science that could potentially undermine the established norm against the use of biological weapons. In this context, we have taken note of the alarm sounded by the High Representative of Disarmament Affairs over “increasing likelihood of biological warfare” and the “unimaginable devastation and suffering to human population” it could bring.

We therefore take positive note of UNODA’s efforts to establish a small operational capacity to conduct effective and credible investigations into the alleged use of biological weapons. We would also look forward to updates on the work on developing a framework to ensure coordinated international response to the use of biological weapons.

We underscore the importance of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X of the Convention through enhancing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in toxins, biological agents, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. In this context, we reiterate the need for further strengthening the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to effectively respond to various capacity building needs of State Parties.

Bangladesh looks forward to informed deliberations on all related issues during the inter-session period prior to the next BWC Review Conference, and acknowledges the need for addressing the critical funding shortfalls.

We commend Nieu, the State of Palestine and the Central African Republic for their accession to the Convention.

I thank you.