



BANGLADESH

Statement by Mr. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam, Deputy Permanent Representative under Thematic Discussion on “Other Weapons of Mass Destructions” in the First Committee of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly

23 October 2019

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 stressing the need for further strengthening multilateral efforts to prevent the use or threat of use of Weapons of Mass Destruction that contain chemical, biological and radioactive materials. We are deeply concerned about the growing possibility of terrorists and other unauthorized non-state actors gaining access to WMDs.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh never faltered to fulfill its commitment under various CWC provisions in an effective and non-discriminatory manner. Immediately after the ratification of the CWC in 1997, Bangladesh submitted necessary declaration regarding the chemical weapons and their production facilities. We enacted the Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act in 2006, formulated the Enrollment Rules in 2010, and following that established Bangladesh National Authority for CWC. We reiterate our call for universalization of the

Convention and urge the four States that are yet to become party to it to expedite their accession. It is critical that states still possessing Chemical weapons destroy their remaining stockpiles within a reasonable period in a concrete and transparent manner. Also, as the destruction of declared chemical weapon stockpiles nears completion, we must ensure sustained vigilance to prevent their re-emergence and further proliferation.

Bangladesh condemns, in the strongest terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. We believe in the principle that those responsible for use of chemical weapons must be held accountable in a transparent manner. In this regard, we stress the paramount importance of upholding the credibility and integrity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (OPCW) and allowing the OPCW Technical Secretariat to deliver on its mandates and responsibilities with due diligence and impartially. As an elected member of the Executive Council of the OPCW, we are playing our part towards global efforts for chemical disarmament. We have recently contributed \$15,000 to support the project to upgrade the current OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store for construction of a new facility called the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology. We also partnered with OPCW to implement OPCW HOSPREP Project in two largest hospitals in Dhaka last year to improve their emergency management capacity during Chemical Incidents. These are some of our demand-driven initiatives with OPCW in fulfilling our responsibilities under the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

Alongside CWC, we also remain committed to fulfilling the provisions of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). We share our concerns with others over the advances in biological science potentially contributing to further proliferation of biological weapons. In this context, we have taken note of the alarm sounded by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu in her statement to the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention about the increasing risks of acquisition, access and use of biological weapons by non-State actors due to the developments in science and technology. Also, her reflections upon the limitations of the existing international instruments to maintain vigilance over fast-moving technology in biological field is significant. We, therefore, stress the importance of redoubling our efforts to enhance UN's operational capacity to conduct effective and credible investigations into the alleged use of biological weapons and ensure coordinated international response to prevent the use of biological weapons.

We also 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. Promoting the peaceful uses of biology is a critical element of the Convention's implementation. As a country on a development stride, we necessarily take keen interest in the correlation between disarmament and development. Indeed, the implementation objectives of BWC and the Sustainable Development Goals need not be mutually exclusive. We can easily integrate works around SDG3 on good health and wellbeing, for example, with the implementation of the BWC.

I thank you.