



**Statement by H.E. Mr. M Shameem Ahsan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva during thematic discussion on "Other Weapons of Mass Destruction" in the First Committee of the 71st UNGA, New York on Tuesday, 18 October 2016**

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**Mr. Chairman,**

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

We join others in voicing concerns over the resurgence of the use or threat of use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) involving chemical, biological and radioactive materials. While we note progress in disposing off the declared chemical weapon stockpiles in the Syrian Arab Republic and Libya, we feel unsettled by evidence-backed reports of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism regarding chemical weapons use in the Syrian territory.

Our concerns are further aggravated by the knowledge that terrorist groups like ISIL and others are in possession of, and may have resorted to using toxic chemicals, or combinations thereof, as chemical weapons against civilians. We also note that, despite the near universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a handful of countries, widely believed to have chemical weapons capacity and stockpiles, have yet to accede to the Treaty.

Bangladesh remains committed to complete cessation of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has already conducted a number of inspections in Bangladesh's declared chemical industry facilities using certain 'dual use' chemicals. Bangladesh hosted the 16th Asian Chemical Congress (ACC) from 18-21 November 2015 with a view to promoting safe chemical management and storage for peaceful uses.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The 40th anniversary of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) last year has given further impetus towards promoting universalization of the Treaty. We welcome the recent accessions by Angola and Cote d'Ivoire, and encourage the remaining signatories and non-signatories to follow suit.

We look forward to constructive and forward-looking discussions during the 8<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Convention scheduled to be held in Geneva next month. 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. We reaffirm our support for the NAM proposal for resuming and concluding negotiations on a legally binding instrument for

addressing the existing gaps in effective verification concerning compliance with the Convention provisions.

Bangladesh is currently working on developing a national implementing legislation for BTWC. Bangladesh recognizes the need for further strengthening the BTWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in order for it to effectively respond to various capacity building needs of State Parties, especially those in resource-constrained settings.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Likewise, we stress that the ongoing review of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and its successor Resolutions seriously consider the possibility of enhancing the capacity of the concerned Panel of Experts to respond to Member States' request for technical assistance. We see value in the Panel's engagement with national efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring WMDs, their means of delivery, and related materials and technologies.

The recent review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) has reaffirmed the importance of preventing acquisition of WMDs and related materials by terrorists. It has thus created a basis for enhancing the UN's inter-agency coordination in this regard through a dedicated Working Group under the auspices of the UN Counter Terrorism Implementation Taskforce. The Working Group's current initiative at strengthening the UN's coordinated response to exigencies resulting from a possible bio-terrorist attack is a step in the right direction.

We also encourage further work by UNICRI, among others, on CBRN risk mitigation measures, with focus on emerging technological capabilities like robotics and artificial intelligence potentially being used as means of delivery by terrorists and other non-state actors.

To conclude, we reiterate our interest in further discussions on the recent proposal by the Russian Federation to commence multilateral negotiations on possible international legal instruments on preventing chemical and bio-terrorism.

I thank you.

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