

STATEMENT BY DR. ASHWANI KUMAR, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT &
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON THE THEMATIC DEBATE
ON OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AT THE FIRST
COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 25, 2013

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches high importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. These two treaties are examples of non-discriminatory treaties in the field of disarmament which could effectively lead to the total elimination of specific type of weapons of mass destruction.

India associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The recent events in Syria show the importance of the complete destruction and elimination of all chemical weapons stockpiles in the world as soon as possible and that terrorists and non-state actors must be prevented from gaining access to these weapons. The use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone must be condemned and the international norm against the use of chemical weapons must not be breached. India supports the ongoing efforts of the OPCW for the expedited destruction and elimination of chemical weapon stockpiles in Syria.

India served as the Chair of the Executive Council leading upto the Third Review Conference and welcomes the adoption of the Final Report of the Conference by consensus. We welcome the clear expression of the international community's conviction in the Review Conference document that the CWC has reinforced its role as the international norm against chemical weapons and has made a major contribution to international peace and security and complete exclusion of the possibility of use of chemical weapons. The Review Conference also expressed the determination that the destruction of all categories of chemical weapons shall be completed in the shortest possible time in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

India reaffirms that disarmament is a primary goal of the Chemical Weapons Convention and should remain the priority till the complete destruction of all chemical weapons is achieved. India completed the destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles in 2009 as per its obligations and within the stipulated time frame under the CWC. The possessor States should fulfil their obligations within the shortest possible time. Universality is also fundamental to the success of the Convention. Full effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI is essential for the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention.

India, with its large and growing chemical industry, has the second largest number of declared facilities and has been filing chemical industry declarations in an exemplary

fashion. India receives one of the largest number of inspections from OPCW and we have a flawless track record of verification inspections. We believe that the OPCW needs to evolve transparent and objective criteria and modalities for inspections. The provisions of the Convention should be implemented in a manner that does not hinder legitimate activities, especially in countries like India with a large and growing chemical industry. We join other delegations in conveying our felicitations to the OPCW on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Mr. Chairman,

India is committed to improving the effectiveness of the BWC and strengthening its implementation and universalization. We believe this is necessary in view of the new challenges to international peace and security emanating from proliferation trends, including the threat posed by terrorists and other non-State actors seeking access to biological agents for terrorist purposes. We welcome the accession of Cameroon, Nauru, Guyana and Malawi to the BWC this year.

One critical area in which the BWC is lacking is an effective mechanism for verification of compliance. In a multilateral treaty such as the BWC, verification of compliance is critically important for States Parties to be collectively assured that the provisions of the Convention are being implemented by all States Parties. Only a multilaterally agreed mechanism for verification of compliance can provide the assurance of observance of compliance obligations by States Parties and act as a deterrence against non-compliance.

The Seventh Review Conference mandated the current inter-sessional programme to consider three standing agenda items and two items on a biennial basis. We appreciate the chairmanship of Algeria in 2012 and Hungary in 2013 for giving a solid start to the inter-sessional meetings.

India believes that it is critical for the success of the BWC that the commitments and obligations under the Convention are fully and effectively implemented. India has a broad based regulatory framework to prevent the misuse of biological science and technology. We believe that CBMs are an important transparency measure to enhance trust in implementation of the Convention, but cannot substitute a multilaterally agreed mechanism for verification of compliance. In this regard, the decisions taken by the 7th Review Conference should be respected so as not to upset the balance in priorities of States Parties.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the issues that concerns both the BWC and the CWC and to which India attaches due importance is that of export controls. India has strong and law-based national export controls which fulfil all our obligations under these Conventions as well as commitments under UNSCR 1540. India filed its report on UNSCR 1540 in November 2004 and has submitted periodic updates the last being in 2013. India is committed to

maintain the highest international standards with reference to control of chemical, biological and toxin items. In this regard, India has actively engaged with the Australia Group and other export control regimes with a view to seeking full membership.

Thank you.

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