



INDIA
भारत

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Statement by
Mr. Abhishek Banerjee,
Hon'ble Member of Parliament,
at the Thematic Debate
on
Other Weapons of Mass Destruction
at the
First Committee of the
United Nations General Assembly on

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 22, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

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

India attaches high importance to the two Conventions on Chemical and Biological Weapons as examples of non-discriminatory treaties in the field of disarmament for the total elimination of a specific type of weapons of mass destruction. The success of these Conventions can be a model for the future elimination of the other type of weapons of mass destruction- nuclear weapons.

As disarmament is a primary goal of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the remaining possessor States should fulfil their obligations within the shortest possible time. India completed the destruction of its chemical weapon stockpiles in 2009 within the stipulated time frame under the CWC. 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. Universality is also fundamental to the success of the Convention.

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 contributed to international efforts under the UN and the OPCW for the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapon stockpiles. The international community should continue to be vigilant on non-state actors and terrorist groups seeking or using chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

India remains committed to improving the effectiveness of the BWC and strengthening its implementation and its universalization. India shares the widespread interest amongst States Parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention through the negotiation and conclusion of a Protocol for that purpose. 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 or other non-state actors seeking access to biological agents or toxins for terrorist purposes.

We support a robust consultation process among all States Parties leading to the Eighth Review Conference next year, so as to contribute to its success through preparations on substantive and procedural issues. India is making substantive contributions in this regard. We have submitted a Joint Working Paper with France on measures to strengthen Assistance under Article VII of the Convention. We have tabled a Joint Working Paper with the United States on strengthening the implementation of Article III of the Convention. These demonstrate India's contribution of concrete proposals on key aspects of the Convention and our willingness to work with

partners to build broad based understandings and agreement that would benefit all State Parties to the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

India is committed to maintaining the highest international standards with reference to control of nuclear, chemical, biological and toxin weapons and their means of delivery. In this regard, India has made considerable progress in its engagement with the relevant multilateral export control regimes with a view to seeking full membership. India has strong and law-based national export controls consistent with the highest international standards. India has filed reports to UNSCR 1540 and has provided the latest update this year.

A world without weapons of mass destruction would be a world without fear of instant annihilation. In conclusion I would like to quote Rabindranath Tagore - great son of India and a great poet of Bengal:

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake*

Thank you.