

Statement by India**during the thematic debate on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction
at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, October 2021**

India is deeply concerned by the growing linkages between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and is fully cognizant of the need to urgently address this grave threat to humanity through international cooperation and within the United Nations framework.

2. Having faced the menace of terrorism for many decades, India through its annual Resolution at the UNGA, titled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", has drawn the attention of the international community to the dangers of the proliferation of WMD and the potential for its exploitation by terrorists and non-state actors for hostile purposes. Tabled since 2002 and adopted by consensus, the resolution urges Member States to support international efforts as well as to take and strengthen national measures, as appropriate, to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. India seeks the continued support of all Member States towards these important initiatives that are embodied in the resolution under the Other WMD Cluster and for its adoption by consensus.

3. On its part, India has an overarching and integrated legislation in the Indian domestic law, namely, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Act of 2005, that effectively translates at the operational level, India's firm commitment to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. India has a robust and effective national export control system based on legislation, regulations and a control list of sensitive material, equipment and technologies consistent with the highest international standards. Furthermore, India contributes to the global non-proliferation efforts as a member of the export control regimes including the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group.

4. India attaches high importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is a unique, non-discriminatory, multilaterally negotiated and internationally verifiable disarmament instrument and serves as a model for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. India maintains that the use of chemical weapons, anywhere, by anybody and under any circumstances cannot be justified and the perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable. Any use of chemical weapons is in complete disregard of humanity, is reprehensible and contrary to the provisions of the Convention, as well as accepted international legal norms.

5. India believes that the provisions of the Convention must be implemented in a manner that it does not hinder legitimate activities. With a burgeoning chemical industry and with the second largest number of declared chemical facilities to the OPCW, India ranks among the States Parties receiving the largest number of industry inspections from the OPCW and has an impeccable track record of verification inspections.

6. India shares the concerns related to the recent instances of the alleged use of chemical weapons in various parts of the world, including by non-state actors, especially terrorist groups and in this regard, underlines the need for the full and effective implementation of the Convention. India urges that the provisions and procedures laid down in the Convention be strictly adhered to by the OPCW and the Member States and that the concerns regarding alleged use be addressed on the basis of cooperation among all parties concerned. India calls on States Parties to the CWC to undertake appropriate measures to prevent use or threat of use of chemical weapons by non-state actors.

7. India accords high priority to the universalization and full and effective implementation of the BWC as well as further strengthening of the Convention through the negotiation of a comprehensive and legally binding protocol. The Meetings of Experts of the BWC held this year have been a fruitful exchange of in-depth views on a number of important issues and a significant contribution towards strengthening the inter-sessional process under the Convention. India looks forward to constructive engagement at the Review Conference next year and a meaningful outcome to strengthen the Convention. India seeks the support of all Member States on its joint proposal with France for establishment of a database to strengthen assistance, response and preparedness under Article VII of the BWC.

8. We must make sure that the financial health of the Convention is on a sustainable footing by ensuring both stability and predictability of resources. We would urge all States Parties to ensure that their financial contributions are made in time which would help in addressing the severe challenges the Convention is currently faced with regard to its financial status.

9. India is ready to work with all Member States on these important issues with a view to preserving global peace and security.

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