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**Statement by
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of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

before the

**Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to
the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,
Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological)
and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BWC)**

20 November 2006 - Geneva

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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. President,

At the outset I would like, on behalf of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). I am confident that with diplomatic skills and outstanding experience this Conference would achieve a successful outcome. Please be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation in discharging your duties entrusted to you by this Conference. My congratulations also extend to the Secretary General, Mr. Tim Caughley and other members of the Bureau.

I would also like to associate my delegation with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Cuba on behalf of the NAM States Parties to the Convention. We believe the principles reflected in the Final Document of the recent NAM Summit are of crucial importance and should guide us in our current deliberations.

Mr. President,

The Islamic republic of Iran, attaches great importance to the multilaterally negotiated instruments on Weapons of Mass Destruction including BWC which are essential for the maintenance of international and regional peace and security. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the UN Charter, provide the only sustainable method of addressing disarmament and international security issues. In this context we should pave the way to make the Sixth BWC Review Conference a successful event and to produce a comprehensive and balanced final declaration.

Mr. President,

We believe that the effective contribution of the Convention to international and regional peace and security would be enhanced through universal adherence to the Convention. Regretfully after more than three decades since the entry into force of the Convention, its universality has not been realized. It should be underlined that the Non- Parties in particular the advanced ones in biotechnology and those in volatile regions pose serious threat to the international and regional peace and security and therefore we call upon them to accede to the Convention without further delay.

We also call upon States Parties to remain committed with their obligations not to transfer equipment, materials (including biological agents

and toxins), as well as scientific and technological information to Non-States Parties. Introduction of disincentives for the Non- Parties to the Convention would facilitate the realization of the universality of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Another source of concern for my country is a major loophole in the Convention namely not to prohibit the use of biological weapons explicitly and categorically. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes in a total ban on the use of biological weapons, which is explicit and devoid of judgmental interpretations and emphasizes on the urgent need for the States Parties to remove this loophole.

With this view, the Islamic Republic of Iran formally presented a proposal in 1996 Review Conference to amend the Article I and the title of the Convention to include explicitly the prohibition of use of biological weapons.

Mr. President,

Commencement of the negotiations on Additional Protocol to the Convention and consequently the inclusion of prohibition of use of biological weapons in the Article I of the negotiating draft text gave rise to the hope that this loophole in the Convention would be removed. Nevertheless, due to the failure of the Fifth BWC Review Conference to adopt the Protocol to the Convention, and the current stalemate prevailing on the negotiations of the above mentioned Protocol originated from opposition of one of the State Parties, as well as the persistent risk of use or threat of use of biological weapons, have left no choice for us but to further follow the issue. In this line, the Islamic Republic of Iran has once more formally requested the Depositories of the Convention to start the amendment process and inform the States Parties of Iran's proposal based on amending the Article I of the Convention to include the word "use".

In the same context, at the initial proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the NAM suggested the General Assembly to adopt a resolution in calling upon those States that continue to maintain reservations to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and Bacteriological Methods of Warfare to withdraw them. Iran appreciates the withdrawal of reservations to this Protocol by a number of States Parties since the last Review Conference, and calls upon all States, which continue to maintain reservation to it, to withdraw their reservations and support the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in this regard, which is tabled biennially.

We would like to emphasize on the importance of the Protocol for the

Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, and to call all States Parties to this Protocol to fulfill their obligations assumed under it.

Iran continues to strongly believe that the only sustainable manner of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory legally binding agreement.

We are deeply disappointed that due to the opposition of a single State Party, that is the U.S.A, the endeavors of the States Parties to the BWC to strengthen the implementation of the Convention have so far failed to bear the fruits and the results of seven years of negotiations on a legally binding instrument could not be finalized.

It should be underscored that the limited nature of the decision taken during the resumed session of the Fifth Review Conference in November 2002 can not in any manner substitute the negotiations on the above mentioned Protocol.

Mr. President,

I categorically reject what the US delegation stated about my country. These baseless allegations are contrary to the cooperative spirit of this Conference as well as the Articles of the convention. This American administration has totally failed in multilateralism in general , and in areas related to disarmament in particular.

Mr. President,

The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that facilitation of and participation in the fullest possible exchanges and enhanced international cooperation in the field of peaceful biotechnological activities, aimed at economic and social development, is a fundamental element in strengthening the implementation of the Convention. In this regard, the full and comprehensive implementation of Article X, on an equal and non-discriminatory basis, especially in the light of recent scientific and technological developments in the field of biotechnology, which increase the potential for cooperation amongst States Parties can not be overemphasized.

Lack of proper implementation of Article X prevents the less developed and developing States Parties from fulfilling their plans to control and eradicate infectious diseases. Therefore, the States Parties should support an international system for combating and eradicating the emerging diseases in humans, animals and plants and to support other specific programs to improve the effectiveness of national, regional and international efforts on the diagnosis, surveillance, prevention, control and treatment of diseases caused by microbial

and other biological agents and toxins, in particular infectious diseases, including collaborative vaccine research and development as well as relevant training programs. The recent outbreaks of avian influenza, known as bird flu, which affected a number of countries and appeared as a world wide threat further highlights the crucial importance of international and transboundary cooperation amongst States Parties in implementing Article X.

It should be pointed out that the States Parties have a legal obligation to refrain from imposing restrictions or limitations for transfers that would hamper economic or technological development of States Parties or international cooperation for peaceful applications in the field of biotechnology. Therefore, development of regulatory mechanisms should only be undertaken by harmonizing both the promotional and regulatory aspects and on a non- discriminatory basis. To this end, the States Parties should undertake to review their national regulations governing international exchanges and transfers in order to ensure its consistency with the objectives of the Convention and specifically the provisions of Article X.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that any politically motivated measures such as arbitrary export control regimes which restrict transfer, development and promotion of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge, would hamper the economic and technological progress of States Parties and clearly violate Article X of the Convention.

I thank you Mr. President.