Statement by
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Before

The Preparatory Committee of the Eighth Review Conference of the
Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling
of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons (BTWC)

Geneva, 8 August 2016
In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

Let me, at the outset extend congratulations of my delegation to you Ambassador György Molnár on your election as the President-Designate for of the Eighth Review Conference and the Chairperson of its Preparatory Process. You could rest assured of the constructive cooperation of my delegation in discharge of your mandate. Our appreciation also goes to the able members of Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for their hard work.

Mr. Chairman,

As a victim of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We are of the view that the 8th REVCON outcome should create a delicate balance towards strengthening all provisions of the Convention to preserve its integrity.

In recent years, Mr. Chairman, the world is witnessing a peculiar incorporation of different developments; new advances in the field of bio-science and biotechnology have produced aspiration among many for their peaceful exploitation in prevention, protection, response, treatment and recovery of the related agents; and on the other hand, negligence is inspired persistently on the pathway of escalation of constraints on access to these science and technologies by the developing countries under the quasi-justification of dual use nature of some biological advances and biotechnology, restricting and/or limiting the
benefits of its globalization behind the disguise of preventing terrorists from getting access to such supremacy. This dilemma is an unfortunate reality, which endangers integrity of the Convention. While certain advances in biology and biotechnology, have brought considerable benefit to mankind, pessimistic and suspicious approaches for certain associated risks, will cost of losing the prospective benefits, leading to monopoly and exclusivism.

Fragmented proposals and approaches are not in the best interest of the international community in the process of reviewing the Convention’s operations. This kind of approaches would adversely affect the overall objectives of the Convention.

The framework for our work in the last inter-sessional period upon the mandate of the 7th Review Conference was to structure common understanding and possible effective action on issues identified by 7th Rev Con, if so agreed by consensus. While the past inter-sessional period promoted some understanding, but still effective actions are necessary for strengthening the Convention in its entirety. The multilateral negotiations aiming at non-discriminatory legally binding instrument, strengthening the Convention in its totality is yet an overwhelming burden and concern.

Though there is no doubt that the State Parties to the Convention have the main responsibility in the implementation of the Convention, nevertheless, selective approaches to structure discriminatory measures in the absence of legal framework would result in lopsided arbitrary implementation of selective Articles of the Convention under which unjustified and unacceptable excuse and/or politically motivated measures such as arbitrary limitations and restrictions on the transfer, development and promotion of equipment, materials and scientific and technological
knowledge, would be a disservice to bridging the gap and building trust, confidence and capacity for the State Parties to benefit from new advances in the field of bio-science and bio-technology.

It should be well noted that until and unless the momentum for negotiating of a legally binding instrument comes, any measures by the States Parties would have the value of merely being as voluntary measures in nature as agreed. Therefore, certain suggestions and proposals that are expanded in particular including recent presented working papers aiming at converting the current inter-sessional practice to a fragmented compliance mechanism on self-selective measures, while ignoring certain provisions of the Convention, are contrary to the comprehensive nature of the Convention, which requires holistic approach to preserve its integrity. In principle, the issue of compliance is a distinct matter that should be deliberated in terms of a devised comprehensive legal regime not incremental approach.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation strongly believes in the power of multilateralism and multilaterally negotiated documents to address the gaps and faults, as well as the barriers in the implementation of the Convention, and stands ready to work together to comprehensively strengthen the Convention in a balanced manner, especially in the area of international cooperation for peaceful purposes to overcome the longstanding obstacles that hampering the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X of the Convention including by addressing the denial cases to Developing States Parties, including through resumption of negotiations on a legally binding instrument.
Given the increasing occurrence of some emerging and re-emerging unusual diseases with international concerns in the last decade, the issues of capacity building through international cooperation, bridging the gap between the developed and developing countries, finding effective ways and means to target and mobilize resources for international cooperation and the free and unlimited exchange of science and technologies in the context of the Convention cannot be overemphasized, and are of utmost importance for improving the national implementation of the Convention by all State Parties.

National implementation is an important subject that all the measures under Articles III & IV should necessarily comprise the confluence of all obligations under the Convention. In this context, the obligations under certain instrument are not separable as the compliance is construed narrowly in terms of distinctive national actions and measures as key for judgment about compliance of States Parties, for justification of unilateral or unjustifiable discrimination between States parties or disguised restrictions on transfers for peaceful purposes. Such measures are against the principle and purposes of the Convention which requires the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention.

Wide range of selective measures including, peer review mechanism, CBMs expansion and assistance networking and its link to Article V consultation and cooperation are not balanced, and giving exclusive role to a restricted body apart from the Convention which certain countries are particularly being out of touch, due to their veto power are all examples of exclusiveness and fractional implementation of the Convention. Likewise,
certain additional tasks in terms of mandate renewal and new staff and budget planning envisaged for ISU, which Developing States Parties are not equitably represented, merely adds among other implications, the burden of meeting and its additional costs.

We also strongly believe that the universality of the Convention which itself as a non-tradable good, should be pursued by any Government. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the firm belief that universal adherence to the Convention is more quintessential in the Middle East, whose most technologically advanced parties' non-allegiance to the BWC poses a serious threat to the regional and international peace and security.

**Mr. Chair,**

Last but not least, I would like to inform the distinguished delegations that, the Islamic Republic of Iran is presenting three working papers on “Investigation under the framework of BTWC”, “The BTWC Review Process of Science and Technology” and “Addressing the Challenges of Transfers under the Framework of BTWC”. The first W.P is numbered 17 and is distributed, and we hope that the other two will also be presented and posted in the related website very soon.

To conclude, **Mr. Chair,** my delegation is firmly determined to follow the enhancement of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention, and based on this very principle it will carefully examines any proposal.

**I thank you Mr. Chairman.**