Statement by Mr. Reza Najafi  
Director for Disarmament and International Security  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
in the Thematic Discussion on other Weapons of Mass Destruction  
at the 62nd UNGA First Committee  
New York, 23 October 2007

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

Today, my Statement is focused on the Chemical Weapons Convention. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran noted three weeks ago, the Chemical Weapons Convention is indeed of significant importance to Iran. No nation has suffered more from chemical weapons than the Iranian people. Iran, as the only victim of the use of chemical weapons in recent history, is well familiar with the very destructive effects of the use of such weapons.

With its tens of thousands victims of the cruel chemical attacks launched by the regime of Saddam Hussein in the course of the war imposed on Iran, my country has been witnessing the sufferings of these innocent people while having to shoulder the burden of alleviating their painful plight single-handedly.

This bitter experience has become a determining factor in the national security strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to renounce
any types of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and in our unshaken resolve to pursue the realization of the goal of a world free from WMD.

The Islamic Republic of Iran played a significant role in the course of negotiations of the CWC. After the ratification of the Convention, Iran has successfully implemented its obligations under the CWC and fully cooperated with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, demonstrating its accountability for that purpose to the international community.

My country rightly expects the other Member States to remain accountable with regard to their obligations under this important international instrument. It is evident that the destruction of all the existing chemical weapons and observance of the deadlines provided for this purpose are of primary importance.

The chemical weapons threat is dangerously real. To rid the world of this threat, and to materialize in full the purpose and object of the CWC, one needs to ensure the universality of the CWC. However, the situation of the adherence to the CWC in the Middle East region is not promising. The notorious possessor of WMD, namely Israeli regime by refusing to submit itself to any type of international monitoring, continues to be the only obstacle in the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. As long as this regime continues to develop nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in its secret facilities with impunity, there is no prospect for the universality of the CWC in our region.
The threats emanating from the possible use of chemical weapons and agents by terrorist groups also underline the need to effectively counter this mounting danger.

Mr. Chairman,

Iran attaches the highest priority to ensuring the integrity of the Convention and its full and non-discriminatory implementation, in particular its article XI. The Convention is integrated as a whole; that is an interwoven body of norms, whose provisions are mutually reinforcing. It is impossible to neglect and violate any one segment without undermining the entire Convention. The continuation of the non-transparent ad-hoc export control regimes can only damage the Convention and its long-term goal, which we have all pledged ourselves to support. It is fundamental to ensure the removal of and prevent the imposition of any discriminatory restriction on access to materials, equipment and technology by developing States Parties to the Convention for their continued and peaceful development.

The other important provisions of the Convention are related to the protection and assistance. As it was provided by Article X of the CWC, the assistance means "medical antidotes and treatments" for the victims who have suffered from the use of such inhuman weapons. However, the medical treatment is not sufficient and it can only cover a part of the needs of the victims. The other humanitarian aspects of the assistance to the chemical weapons victims should be explored and materialized.

One of the unexplored dimensions is to bring to the justice the culprits who supported the use of such weapons. As credible records
indicate, Saddam's regime was assisted by a number of countries in its development of chemical weapons who provided materials and precursors. The same countries financially and through banking systems supported Saddam's WMD programme. Those countries are responsible for killing and disabling of tens of thousands of Iranian chemical victims. They should take measures to bring the perpetrators to justice and compensate the harms and casualties incurred as a result of their irresponsible actions. The Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the CWC States Parties should address seriously and responsibly this issue. This is a responsibility which should not be ignored by the members of the international community particularly the CWC Member States. In this context, an international conference on adverse consequences of using chemical weapons against Iran is being held in my country.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, I would like to remind this committee that our Minister of Foreign Affairs three weeks ago proposed that the OPCW should establish a task group to examine and investigate the ways and means of equipping Saddam with chemical weapons. Indeed, publishing of results of efforts of such group will play a great role in preventing of such crimes to occur in the future.

Thank you for your kind attention.