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**Statement by the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
at the general debate**

**2017 Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the  
Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin  
Weapons and on Their Destruction**

**4 December 2017, Geneva**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset we congratulate you upon your assumption of duties as the Chair of the 2017 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and express our confidence that under your able guidance we will be able to advance the work of the Convention. We also take this opportunity to thank the staff members of the Implementation Support Unit for their dedicated work. We associate ourselves with NAM statement delivered earlier.

We note with satisfaction the positive developments in science and technology which have brought enormous benefits to a various range of fields, including health, environment and agriculture. However, we are also deeply worried of the adverse effects that accompany this progress. Globalization and dynamic advancement of the information technologies render scientific knowledge more accessible, which in its turn increases the chances of its possible misuse by non-state actors.

The facilitated access to materials and technology on different forms of weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the conflict affected areas non-controlled by the respective governments has always been and continues to be a major cause for concern for the entire international community.

Azerbaijan hopes that issues related to agreement on inter-sessional program will be successfully settled at this meeting.

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to non-proliferation. In the face of emerging proliferation threats and due to our geographic location we attach utmost importance to the prevention of possible use of our territory as a transit route for illicit trafficking of materials that can be used for the development of WMDs, including biological or toxin weapons. We have developed over years a comprehensive national export control system with a solid legislation basis in line with international standards. Up to date our national export control system has proved itself as a reliable mechanism in preventing illicit trafficking. But due to the fact that twenty percent of our territories is under Armenian military occupation for almost 25 years it is not possible for us to implement full scale export controls in these territories.

Azerbaijan believes that strict verification and confidence-building measures are key elements in enhancing stability, transparency and mutual trust. Regular submission of CBMs reports is of great significance in this regard. Azerbaijan remains committed to submit its CBMs reports according to the schedule.

Thank you.