

**Statement by Algeria**  
20 November 2001  
(transcribed from interpretation)

Allow me first of all on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you on becoming President of our work and we can assure you of our fullest support in carrying out your mandate.

It is an honour for me to speak before this august assembly, especially since this is the first time my country has spoken here as a State Party of the Convention on Biological Weapons. Algeria has indeed joined the States Parties to the Convention this year after a period of studying the Convention and the ratification, which took some time since we had to develop the necessary legislative arrangements first.

The ratification is justified by the policy my country has persistently pursued against weapons of mass destruction and therefore prevent proliferation of such weapons as part of our efforts towards general and comprehensive disarmament which we are striving for in the Conference on Disarmament.

Algeria's commitment goes back to before our since the Algerian territory, during the colonial period, was used as an area for experimenting weapons of mass destruction. Therefore it was only logical for us, once we became independent, to militate strongly for a world free of all weapons of mass destruction through multilateral treaties and agreements guaranteeing effective measures for the prohibition of such weapons.

Thus the Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological, biological and toxin weapons and their destruction, like the Convention on Chemical Weapons, is one further milestone in our duty to combat such weapons. We all here must give these texts the broadest possible scope to rid human society once and for all of this threat. Therefore we must strive to give this text the necessary legal measures to give it operational power.

This is all the more urgent because in addition to the danger of competition among States, new threats are emerging which experts have called "asymmetric war", such as the fearsome contamination with anthrax we have seen. This new branch of international terrorism holds out the prospect that weapons will be used by such people, which we are seeking here to prohibit.

In order to prevent such an eventuality we must make a contribution and we must make the necessary commitments to ensure that our work results in tangible, specific results because it is more necessary now than ever to strengthen the provisions of the Convention, to give the Convention the necessary tools so that the international community can face up to the dangers of criminal use of biological agents.

Our efforts also involve the adoption of binding clauses which would strengthen the Convention and fill any gaps it may contain. That is why we profoundly regret the fact that the negotiations, which were to lead to a compliance protocol for the Convention have not been successful. Nevertheless, we hope that the differences that have been expressed by various Parties will be overcome and that the negotiations will resume on a harmonious basis, which will give a positive ... to our work.

We must all bear in mind that the multilateral framework of this Convention is a vital forum, especially since we know what the potential dangers are and no State should benefit from a kind of law of silence. This Convention serves not just to prevent and prohibit biological weapons but it also provides a considerable framework for cooperation among States, particularly between developed and developing States in combating disease.

Indeed, the Convention attaches great importance and deals at length with such cooperation. The practical modality is that that cooperation can take various forms. Transfer of technology, the peaceful use of biology, particularly in the area of disease prevention as stipulated in Article X of the Convention we feel are of particular importance.

These dimensions of the Convention have not yet been exploited to their best, if you bear in mind the inherent advantages of such provisions, which are part of the duty of solidarity and which promote the well-being of mankind as a whole.

In this connection, Algeria would like here to express its total willingness to work within the Convention and to ensure that the Convention can evolve and face up to the new challenges before us.