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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF MALAYSIA
AT THE MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO
THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
GENEVA, DECEMBER 2009**

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Malaysian delegation extends to you, Mr. Chairman, our congratulations on your assumption as Chairman of the 2009 BWC Meeting of States Parties and for the successfully chairing the Meeting of Experts earlier this year. We commend you and the efforts that you have undertaken during the interim period, to meet with States Parties in preparing for our work today. We are confident that the thorough preparations undertaken by you, we would move progressively towards achieving the objectives of this meeting. Please be assured of my delegation's full support in the fulfilment of your task.

2. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for the valuable role and excellent work it has done so far under the stewardship of Mr. Richard Lennane. We hope that the ISU, within its mandate, will be able to assist States Parties in its efforts to further strengthen the Convention.

3. Malaysia wishes to align itself by the Statement made by Cuba on behalf of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement to the BWC.

Mr Chairman,

4. The Meeting of Experts earlier this year has laid down for us the necessary substantive foundation for this Meeting of States Parties. My delegation has taken note of all the views and positions that were expressed during the Expert Meeting and those of yours, Mr. Chairman, to take our work forward. We thank you for the Chairman's paper entitled "Synthesis of considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers, and interventions on the topics under discussion at the Meeting of Experts" which serves as a good basis for our deliberations in this meeting.

Mr Chairman,

5. Malaysia recognises the importance for States Parties to undertake serious, persistent efforts as well as concrete actions to strengthen national and international efforts and capabilities as stipulated in the Convention. With regard to fulfilling the aims of the Convention, Malaysia continues to take measures to promote capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases, primarily through enhanced collaborative efforts, regionally and internationally.

6. In this area, Malaysia has supported and will continue to support activities undertaken by regional organizations, primarily ASEAN and international

organizations or partners such as WHO, UNICEF, IDB and the CDC Atlanta. We have engaged bilaterally with the Governments of Australia, Canada and the United States of America in line with ideals of the Convention. The collaborations have mainly been in the area of combating emerging infectious diseases that affect human health as well as management of both animal diseases and zoonotic infections.

7. We take this opportunity to mention a few activities that were held in Malaysia this year, inter-alia:

- The Influenza Pandemic Rapid Containment Exercise, (PANSTOP III 2009) which was held from 6-7 April 2009 in Putrajaya;
- A Seminar on "Multi-sector Pandemic Preparedness: Experiences from Asia and Europe" organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) which was held on 17 November 2009 in Kuala Lumpur;
- The Third Programme Coordination Group Meeting of the ASEAN Plus Three Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) Programme, which was held from 18-20 November 2009 in Kuala Lumpur; and
- The Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Exercise (TTX), 11-13 March 2009, Putrajaya

8. A summary of these programmes are attached together with our statement as Annex I.

Mr Chairman,

9. Malaysia is of the strong view that given the increasing development in the field of biological science, there is a growing need for scientific and technological cooperation between States. Article X of the Convention provides for this. Malaysia firmly believes that Article X can be implemented in such a way allowing States Parties to undertake, to facilitate and participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes. Whilst there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution for national implementation and approaches, such collaborative efforts certainly helps in strengthening or complementing existing national frameworks in place.

10. A recent example is Malaysia's participation in an exercise organised by the US State Department. The Bioterrorism International Coordination Exercise which was held on 7-8 September 2009, in Montreux, Switzerland allowed experts from Malaysia to share and learn best practices with other experts around the world. The wealth of knowledge and experience gained by the exercise were used to further strengthen existing surveillance and response systems in Malaysia.

11. Malaysia believes that such successful collaborative efforts as mentioned, brings us closer to the overall objectives of the Convention. In this connection, we call on States Parties to renew commitments and undertakings towards promoting and enhancing international cooperation as enshrined in Article X of the Convention.

Mr Chairman

12. We would also like to take this opportunity to update you on the status of our draft Biological Weapons Convention Bill. Currently, we are at the last leg where the draft bill is being reviewed by Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture before endorsement by the Malaysian Parliament. The Bill will be part of Malaysia's legislative framework to ensure effective implementation of the Convention. The Bill also set standards of protocol in good laboratory practices, technical, safety and security matters as well as minimum qualification or experience required for professionals in the field of biological sciences. The Bill will be complemented by relevant existing laws, such as the Plant Quarantine Act No. 167, 1976, Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act No. 342, 1988, Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1994 and the Biosafety Act 2007.

13. On another note, we acknowledge that the ideas and proposals reflected in your synthesis paper, Mr Chairman, have also been taken into consideration, in updating code of conducts that supports these laws.

Mr Chairman,

14. In concluding, the Malaysian delegation would like to reaffirm our commitment towards meeting the obligations of the BWC. We would also like to reassure you of our full cooperation for the success of this Meeting.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Annex I

1. PANSTOP III 2009, 6-7 April 2009, Putrajaya

- On 6-7 April 2009, the Ministry of Health Malaysia in collaboration with the *World Health Organisation's Western Pacific Regional Office* in Manila conducted a joint Influenza Pandemic Rapid Containment exercise, termed PANSTOP III 2009 in Putrajaya.
- The two-day exercise was part of the Ministry of Health's ongoing efforts to prepare for a potential influenza pandemic.
- During the exercise the nation's rapid containment decision-making process and the operational aspects of rapid containment were tested, with the participation of officials from the ministry and other relevant local ministries and agencies.
- Observers from the Canadian High Commission, the Embassy of Japan, the New Zealand High Commission, the US Embassy and representative from the Singapore Ministry of Health also took part. The local observers included state epidemiologists.
- The outcome of the exercise provided both Malaysia and the *World Health Organisation* (WHO) a wealth of information and approaches in conducting rapid containment operations. It reinforced the need for near seamless line of both intra and interagency communications to aid appropriate response in a timely and decisive manner.

2. Multi-sector Pandemic Preparedness: Experiences from Asia & Europe, 17 November 2009, Kuala Lumpur

- *The Asia-Europe Foundation* (ASEF) organised a seminar on "Multi-sector Pandemic Preparedness: Experiences from Asia and Europe" on 17 November 2009 in Kuala Lumpur.
- The seminar was a side-event of the *ASEAN Plus Three Emerging Infectious Diseases Programme Coordination Group Meeting*, and underscored the challenges facing Asia and Europe in managing current and future pandemics, taking stock of relevant efforts by government, non-government and business sectors at national, regional and international levels.
- The seminar also gave an overview and analysis of initiatives in the area of multi-sector pandemic coordination and preparedness, bringing together experiences from Asia and Europe.

3. Third Programme Coordination Group Meeting of the ASEAN Plus Three EID Programme, 18-20 November 2009, Kuala Lumpur

- The Third Programme Coordination Group (3rd PCG) is as part of the *ASEAN Plus Three Emerging Infectious Diseases* (EID) Programme.
- The 3rd PCG Meeting has the following objectives:
 - To provide an update on the progress of programme implementation;
 - To identify outcomes/impact of the Phase II of the Programme;

- To develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the Medium-Term Plan (2010-2015) of the Phase III of the Programme, following previous consultations with the Member States and the Plus Three Countries; and
 - To identify the activities of Programme's Phase II implementation and in the transition toward the Phase III of the Programme.
- The PCG is the body with overall responsibility for planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the EID Programme's progress. It is composed of the *ASEAN Expert Group on Communicable Diseases (AEGCD)* Focal Points, representatives from the *ASEAN Secretariat*, *Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)*, *World Health Organization (WHO)*, *World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)* and *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)*.

4. Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Exercise (TTX), 11-13 March 2009, Putrajaya

- The Disease Control Division of Ministry of Health (MOH) and the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) conducted a *Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Exercise (TTX)* in Putrajaya from 11 – 13 March 2009.
- The purpose of the TTX was to identify opportunities and develop plausible solutions to strengthen existing pandemic and other infectious disease surveillance and response systems in Malaysia.
- The exercise was facilitated by a group of subject matter experts from the U.S. and Malaysian Ministry of Health. This exercise served to enhance the already close cooperation and collaboration between both countries, vital to preparations against the threat of pandemic influenza.

