

PAKISTAN
BWC

Mr. Chairman,

We are very pleased to congratulate you, a fellow member of the Non-Aligned Movement, as the President of the 2012 BWC meeting of the States Parties. We are confident that under your wise leadership, we will be able to take forward the work of the Convention. I can assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in achieving a positive outcome of this meeting.

Your synthesis paper of 01 October, 2012, was very informative and useful. I take this opportunity to acknowledge that you maintained the transparency and inclusiveness in the preparation of the synthesis paper.

I would also like to utilize this opportunity to commend the good work carried out by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by Iran, in its capacity as the Coordinator of the Group of Non-Aligned Movement and Other States (NAM).

We acknowledge the important successes achieved 7th Review Conference. The Review Conference agreed on a Final Declaration embodying a common vision for the Convention and its implementation and thus achieved an optimum outcome. We consider this meeting to play a vital role in setting the course for

the current inter-sessional period (2012 – 2015) and hopes that it will carry out its work in line with the mandate given by the 7th BWC Review Conference.

Pakistan attaches great importance to the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention and remains committed to implementing all provisions of the Convention. We welcome the decision of the 7th Review Conference to include cooperation and assistance as one of the standing agenda items, with a particular focus on strengthening Article X implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

We are hopeful that together we will be able to find practical ways to fully implement Article X of the Convention. For Pakistan the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Article X of the BWC remains essential for the realization of this Convention's objectives. In light of the rapid scientific and technological developments in life sciences, there is a need to strengthen international cooperation among States Parties. In this regard, Pakistan reiterates its support to the NAM Working Paper on Article X.

We feel that the detailed submission of national reports with regards to the Article X would contribute positively to strengthening such cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

Subjecting scientific research and free flow of scientific information to undue restrictions is clearly at variance with the obligations undertaken under Article X of the Convention. Such arbitrary restrictions are one of the impediments to the full implementation of Article X.

We believe there is a need for improving capacity of developing States Parties, through international cooperation and assistance in terms of materials, equipment, financial resources, technology and human resource development, to better equip them for detecting and responding to challenges that may arise in the context of the BWC.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan welcomes the discussion on developments in science and technology related to the Convention as part of a standing agenda item, mandated by Article XII of the Convention.

The importance of this issue cannot be overstated in terms of our efforts to keep the BWC relevant. The malign use of the biosciences can kill humans, animals and plants, trigger wars, disrupt infrastructure. Addressing these issues necessitates continued engagement with the scientific, medical, commercial and educational communities. We will have to develop a coordinated approach to the prevention of the misuse of biological science and technology.

Yet at the same time, the discussions need not veer in one direction and should strike a balance between the new threats and challenges as well as the avenues opening up for assistance and cooperation. We feel that the new discoveries in the field of Biological sciences which makes their application simpler and cheaper should be widely available for the developing countries. We also support the view that the potential dual nature of the emerging technologies in this area should not be used as a pretext for proscribing or restricting their availability to developing countries. No steps should be taken to curb legitimate scientific inquiry or economic activity.

Mr Chairman,

Pakistan ratified the BTWC in 1974 as a non-possessor State and remains fully committed to its obligations under the convention. Pakistan has, therefore, taken a range of comprehensive legal and administrative steps to enhance its bio-safety and bio-security regulations. While emphasizing the effective implementation of the Convention, including establishment of a compliance regime and verification mechanism, Pakistan also shares the concerns of the International community regarding the possible use of biological weapons, including by non-State actors. As a state party to BTWC, we are fully cognizant of the potential negative use of biological and toxin agents and our obligations to prevent such use.

The various components of Pakistan's national regulatory framework concerning the BWC includes: the Drugs Act 1976, Plant Quarantine Act 1976, Animal Quarantine Act 1979, Anti- Terrorism Act 1997, and Pakistan Export Control Act 2004, in addition to provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code. Pakistan's Strategic Export Control Division regulates strategic exports according to the National Control List 2005, which has been revised in 2011. Pakistan's Bio-safety Rules 2005 and Bio-safety Guidelines 2005 deal with safety aspects of bio-related materials and facilities.

In 2010, Pakistan also issued its Guidelines on "Code of Conduct for Life Scientists" for implementation and compliance. These guidelines were shared with the BTWC community in the 2010 Meeting of States Parties to the BTWC. Through our inter-agency consultative process, we have drafted BTWC enabling legislation which has been tabled before our Parliament and it is going through the legislative process in the Parliament.

Pakistan is also making consistent efforts to build capacity of its “first responders”. Under the National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan’s Defense Science and Technology Organization (DESTO) has established a Chemo-Bio-Defense Cell (CBDC). Currently, we are working to enhance its capacity to handle biological related incidents through procurement of requisite equipment and training. While we acknowledge the contribution of the states that have assisted us in enhancing our capabilities, we look forward to continued cooperation in this area. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, Pakistan is also ready to share its experience and contribute towards capacity building of other states parties in need, according to its intrinsic capabilities.

Mr Chairman,

We must step up efforts to universalize the BWC. There should be no empty spaces. There is a need to renew and intensify our efforts in expanding the current membership of the Convention, thereby, ensuring universalisation of obligations provided by the Convention.

Pakistan views the CBMs as a tool for increasing transparency and building trust and confidence among States Parties in the implementation of the Convention. We wish to inform the meeting that Pakistan has submitted its Confidence Building Measures for the year 2012 based on the revised forms to the Implementation Support Unit. However, we believe that the CBMs cannot be a tool for assessing compliance by the States Parties, for which the only method is a legally binding mechanism with verification provisions.

Mr Chairman,

The BWC was, and is, a security instrument. Over much of its history, its members have argued over the need to add verification machinery to the treaty. While these efforts did not succeed- for well known reasons- but the failure of our efforts do not diminish the importance of verification machinery. Introduction of a limited and selective compliance mechanism through incremental steps would not work. We reiterate that the only sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement, including on verification provisions, dealing with all the Articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

I thank you,
Mr Chairman.