

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on my own behalf and on behalf of the Algerian delegation on your assumption of the Chair of our proceedings. I am convinced that under your guidance our meeting will contribute to a better understanding of the topic on our agenda, that is codes of conduct for scientists, content, promulgation and adoption. I would like to take this opportunity also to commend the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Peter Goosen, of South Africa.

The cycle of annual meetings began after the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention on Biological Weapons of 2002 and has offered us an opportunity to encourage the discussion and to deepen our understanding and to exchange our respective experiences on certain fundamental aspects of the Biological Weapons Convention. The topic for this session, that is Codes of Conduct for Scientists, offers us an opportunity to better apprehend [*sic*] the issues at stake, the scope and the importance of these instruments. It will also enable us to evaluate the role, the contribution and the manner in which responsibilities of all the actors have been exercised, in particular those of the community of scientists within the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. This especially since the international context at present requires from all of us mobilization and determination in order to confront the various challenges posed by biological weapons.

The risk of vertical and horizontal proliferation of bacteriological weapons, like other weapons of mass destruction, is a genuine threat to international peace and security. The unprecedented development in the area of science and knowledge of biology, and microbiology in particular, makes this risk even greater, this threat more omnipresent, and collective security more vulnerable. The dual use possibilities characterizing biological substances, techniques and technology merely worsen this danger. Indeed, the products of this human effort could be used to promote human well-being and they can also serve prohibited military programmes. Drawing a line between what is legal and what is illegal is not always easy in a laboratory.

The present development of real and virtual communications around the world, where borders are no longer hermetically closed and where information circulates at an unprecedented speed, together with the phenomenon of international terrorism, all of this makes the biological threat even more urgent.

Clearly, this threat concerns the international community as a whole and has arisen in global terms which require from all of us coordinated action and a collective response.

The Biological Weapons Convention in this regard represents a useful and effective tool which the international community has to confront these challenges. Indeed, it is an appropriate framework for us to indicate the way to go and measures to adopt. However, the scope of this important instrument remains limited in that it does not have so far, very unfortunately, the necessary verification mechanism, a mechanism which would guarantee, as with the Chemical Weapons Convention, the effective implementation of its provisions which, in fact, is the only way to establish the necessary confidence amongst State parties.

The cycle of annual meetings begun three years ago, including that for this year, while they are very useful are not an alternative to the need to strengthen the Convention through the adoption of a binding multilateral instrument for verification of its implementation.

Algeria would like to reiterate its position as regards the need to strengthen the Convention with a verification instrument. We urge States parties to take this opportunity of the Review Conference of 2006 to re-initiate negotiations on the draft Verification Protocol in which the States parties have already invested considerable efforts over seven years. In this regard, we would recall the recommendation made by the Group of High-Level Personages in their report "*A safer world: our common cause*" which invites States parties to the Convention on Biological and Toxic Weapons to resume immediately negotiations on a credible verification protocol by inviting the biotechnology sector to participate actively.

Consideration of the topic of codes of conduct for scientists in relation to the provisions of the Convention reflects the importance and also the complexity of this sector which requires appropriate tools and mechanisms. Its objective is to foster greater sensitivity and responsibility and to guide the proceedings and activities of all actors with the people whom you call "stakeholders", in particular scientists, in accordance with the objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention.

The question of these codes evokes the following preliminary comments from our part:

First, the elaboration of these codes should be based on the norms established by the Convention and should be consistent with the legislative and regulatory framework adopted by the State party.

Second, initiatives aimed at the elaboration of codes of conduct specific to the Biological Weapons Convention should be based on existing codes, as well as on efforts under way with those referred to in the Convention, as those in other areas.

The efforts to elaborate codes specific to the Convention could consist of a matrix code which would enable States parties to base themselves on it at the appropriate time and this takes into account the view expressed by the distinguished representative of the United States, who said that there was no single code which might be applied as is to everyone.

Thirdly, this matrix could cover a table of various types of possible codes. These would be tools of a legal nature and different rules: codes of conduct, of ethics and practices, with a view to achieving the maximum objectives for various publics: political decision makers, researchers, jurists and all other persons involved both in the defence sector and others.

Fourth: These codes should not hinder scientific research or constitute a hindrance to the exercise of the legitimate rights of States to acquire biological equipment, substances and technology, as was indicated earlier by the distinguished representative of Iran.

Fifth: This should be something done by all the actors in this area, in particular researchers and scientists.

The discussions that we will have during this session will certainly enable us to achieve a deeper vision of the topic of codes of conduct with a view to identifying common bases to preserve scientific research in general for the benefit of mankind.

Thank you, Sir.