

Statement by Algeria

Monday 24 August 2009, Morning Session

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of our meeting and would like to assure you of its full support for you in carrying out your work.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the preparatory work done leading up to this meeting. We would particularly commend the members of the Implementation Support Unit for the high quality of the working documents that they have kindly made available to us.

My delegation endorses the statement by Cuba on behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned Countries.

In accordance with the decisions of the Sixth Review Conference, our meeting today will be called upon to look at the subject of strengthening cooperation, assistance and international exchanges under Article X of the Convention on the prohibition of biological weapons.

Thus, we are supposed in this framework to explore avenues which will promote peaceful uses of biological science and to help countries that need this assistance to strengthen their capacities in the area of surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment of infectious disease.

In our view, this is a crucial subject concerning the efforts we are making to ensure a balanced implementation of all of the dimensions of the Convention.

This Convention is a cornerstone in the system of international security. It demands that States Parties take the necessary measures to prevent the use of biology for harmful purposes as well as protecting and encouraging quite justifiably the development of peaceful applications of biological science. These applications are vital for the implementation of development programmes, particularly in the area of public health.

Scientific progress and technological advances have opened up enormous horizons in the areas of surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment of infectious disease which deserve to be covered by extensive exchanges among participants to benefit all States.

In this connection, we must promote a broad political partnership to benefit world health. Various international and regional organizations which study and combat disease on a daily basis and promote the health and safety of all of us, such as the WHO, the FAO and the OIE, have a vital role to play in this area.

Above and beyond this exchange function, our meeting is also intended to stimulate an extensive debate on the implementation of the potential contained in Article X of the Convention through practical measures leading towards clearly defined objectives.

It is important that relevant provisions of the Convention on the promotion of cooperation in the area of biology are fully implemented. We must guarantee that they are fully applied.

We know that views have always differed as to the modalities for applying Article X. In fact, there is a widely shared view that the aspirations, which basically are legitimate, of developing countries to benefit from development, progress and discoveries in the area of biology are held hostage by the non-proliferation agenda of developed countries.

We see no other reason for this situation to continue. In fact, we all benefit from strengthened international cooperation in the area of combating disease and reducing biological risks. International cooperation on a broader and more transparent scale is absolutely essential to ensure that we pursue non-proliferation efforts effectively.

This is why we must do our utmost to ensure that in no way should the exercise of the legitimate right of States Parties to acquire equipment, materials and biological technology for development purposes be hindered or opposed or made conditional.

We must naturally take into account the existing disparities between States Parties in terms of development. This implies a sustained level of assistance from developed countries to assist countries which do not have the required capacity in the areas of surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment of infectious disease.

The working document drawn up by the non-aligned countries for this purpose deserves the attention of our meeting.

Our meeting is preparing for the Meeting of States Parties planned in December and fits into the cycle of annual meetings decided on by the Sixth Review Conference at the Convention of 2006.

The meetings that have been held to date have given us a chance to stimulate thinking and to enhance understanding and exchange experience on fundamental aspects of the Convention.

These meetings today are, from this viewpoint, a further opportunity to consider the status of the implementation of one of the pillars of the Convention, that is, Article X.

It is particularly relevant to do this against the backdrop of the holding of the Review Conference planned for 2011.

This is also a good opportunity to recall that the scope of the Convention continues to be limited because it is not endowed with a verification mechanism and to stress once again the need for a resumption of multilateral negotiations on a legally binding instrument in this area.

Algeria continues to be committed to implementing the goals of the Convention and would appeal once again to the States that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so without delay so as to allow us to achieve the objective of universality of the Convention sought by all.

My delegation will be pleased later on to present a report on the national disease surveillance facilities and specific needs in terms of strengthening national capacity.

My delegation looks forward to our work enthusiastically and hopes that our debates will lead to strong conclusions which will help us to come up with a more in-depth vision and broader concept of the contents of Article X and to ensure balance in the implementation of all of the aspects of the Convention.
