

**BWC MEETING OF EXPERTS
23-27 August 2010**

Monday, 23 August, Morning session

MOROCCO

Transcription of the English Interpretation

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I would like to extend to you the warm congratulations of the Kingdom of Morocco for your accession to chair the Meeting of Experts and the Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Biological Weapons and to congratulate you for the efforts you have deployed, as well as the efforts of your predecessor, Mr. Portales, for the preparation of this meeting. You can be assured of the active support of my delegation for the successful completion of our work.

My delegation would like to endorse the declaration made by the Ambassador of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and we would also like to share with the Meeting of Experts the additional following observations:

- The Convention on Biological Weapons is one of the three pillars of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and it must be tackled with particular attention given the rapid development of the life sciences and the multiplication of the double-use risk. We welcome therefore the choice of the theme of this meeting this week, which is organized around the provision of assistance and coordination with the other competent organizations for all those States that request it in the case of the alleged use of biological weapons, including the strengthening of national capacity in terms of screening and diagnosis of illnesses as well as the improvement of the public health system. My delegation is convinced that the promotion of assistance and coordination in the context of the Convention will be a key factor to strengthen the universality thereof. Indeed, the States parties would be better inclined to accede to the Convention if they knew that they can rely on the support and assistance of the States Parties in the case of alleged use of biological weapons by another party.
- The assistance and cooperation in the context of the improvement of national capacities in the areas of oversight and screening and diagnosis of illnesses would make it possible to fight in a coordinated fashion against the use of WMDs and one of the three most transportable pillars thereof is the most dangerous from the point of view of its dissemination and its use. An effective use against the proliferation of viral pandemics must be led in a coordinated fashion regionally and internationally. In the light of this, it is key for the States to strengthen the capabilities of their health systems in general and the capabilities of their laboratories in the areas of surveillance screening and diagnosis of illnesses. This can only occur, especially for developing countries, through the assistance of those countries that are able to provide assistance and through regional cooperation and

international cooperation. Therefore, there is the need for implementation of effective application of Article X of the Convention.

Morocco is actively involved in the international efforts to fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and has acceded to all the initiatives to fight against all forms of terrorism and as such we, with our partners, are striving to implement the provisions of the Convention on Biological Weapons and report regularly on its activities.

In 2005, Morocco set up a National Committee for Biosecurity in charge of the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on the oversight of genetically modified organisms and we are developing the national security plan and a project to create a national committee for ethics in science and the National Committee on biological security and safety and we have been actively involved in a number of initiatives, internationally, regionally and nationally, in the context of biosecurity. The Kingdom of Morocco is actively involved in the Meeting of the Group of Experts for the implementation of a strategy on the security and safety in biological areas for the MENA region.

In Morocco there is no specific regime for biological weapons. However, the law of 28 May 2003, in article 218-3, describes as an act of terrorism the fact of introducing or putting into the atmosphere, the soil or sub-soil or the waters of the Kingdom of Morocco, including its maritime territory, any substances which jeopardizes the health of men or animals or the environment. These crimes are punished by a prison sentence ranging from 10 to 20 years and this is aggravated by a lifelong sentence if these facts have given rise to mutilation, amputation or the deprivation of an organ or any permanent disability for one or several people.

Furthermore, the importation and the sale of vaccinations or therapeutic serum or any other biological substances are subject to an authorization granted by the Minister of Health following the meeting of the Technical Commission.

From an institutional point of view, the Kingdom of Morocco has two P3 confinement laboratories, a PCL3 laboratory and three national research centres, including the National Laboratory for the Control of Veterinary Pharmaceuticals, which meet very strict international standards in this field. No research or development programme for the defence against biological weapons is pursued in Morocco.

With these comments, I would like to thank you for your attention, Mr. Chairman.