

Biological Weapons Convention – 2008 Meeting of States Parties
Geneva, 1-5 December 2008

Monday, 1 December (p.m.), Room XVII

TRANSCRIPT

PLENARY

MOROCCO [from interpretation]: I was instructed by my Ambassador that I should read a declaration as follows:

My delegation is happy to express its congratulations as well as to the members of the Bureau and see that you have the chair for 2008 of the Meeting of Parties to the Convention. Be assured that the cooperation of the delegation of Morocco is at your disposal for the success of our work. I also thank you for the Support Unit and excellent preparation of the meeting and the quality of documents.

On terrorism, bioterrorism is one of the three parts of the arms of massive destruction and there is of course considerable despair for humanity as a whole, given that this phenomenon has now caught the attention of the international community because bioterrorism is very difficult to control. It seems possible to access after all the pathogens and it requires therefore greater vigilance, both from the international scientific community as well as the agents funding (?) the laboratories.

Cooperation among all agents is necessary in order to stop further attempts or attacks causing the contamination of populations by using viruses, bacteria or toxins.

The past has shown in the last few years in certain countries of the world that the international community must create networks in order to combat this type of terrorism. It also calls for greater attention in order to tighten up the surveillance of existing known terrorist groups and prevent them from accessing biological weapons. Prevention and combating any illicit utilization of bacteriological or epidemiological material is essential.

Such goals can only be obtained by exchange of information, development of surveillance or monitoring as well as the organization of meetings and seminars dealing with this subject, the improvement of means of control and protection of dangerous substances.

The Kingdom of Morocco is convinced that biosafety and biosecurity are in fact two sides of the same coin. We are speaking about the protection of pathogens and toxins and preventing their use in areas which are forbidden by the Convention. At the same time, this should not be a pretext for stopping international cooperation for peaceful uses. Therefore we need a mechanism which would help developing countries to better apply the International Sanitary Regulations. It is also essential to have greater cooperation among the United Nations specialized agencies and international organizations active in this area.

The creation of mechanisms should make it possible to acquire in a controlled and regulated manner the necessary microorganisms for the development of new means of safety (?), either for diagnosing or for creation of vaccines or necessary experimentation and could become a stimulating factor.

In this regard, our delegation suggests setting up an Advisory Scientific Council to the Member States Parties for the Convention on Biological Weapons with the mission to give their view.

The Kingdom of Morocco gives great importance to accreditation and certification of entities and installations and individuals participating in analysis, diagnostics, research and development of such biological agents and pathogens and toxins. It further calls for international cooperation, also in the area of training of human resources having as a profile biosafety agents and biosecurity agents, as well as integration of this training into university courses.

In this regard, there was an international seminar in Morocco from 3-5 November of this year, in cooperation with the Department of State of the United States and 12 different departments from the ministries who were concerned and participated in this seminar. Morocco will also organize an international Conference on Biosecurity and Biosafety on 3 and 4 April of next year in Casablanca.

With regard to training, Morocco participated in different workshops organized by Interpol and a special training session in the area of bioterrorism in order to strengthen our capacity and response times and the relevant departments of the Government are concerned – the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Police, as well as Customs.

In the framework of these activities in implementation of the Convention, Morocco is prepared to create committees at a national level dealing with the ethics of sciences on the one hand and biosafety and security on the other hand. The national initiative has a goal: to set up a better synergy between various agents in order to combat accidental release or misuse.

The efficiency of a convention of the nature of our Biological Convention depends of course on whether it is applied universally. Welcoming various efforts taken in States Parties, we would like to promote further the universality of the Convention by increasing our efforts.