

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

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

TRANSCRIPT

PLENARY

ALGERIA [from interpretation]: Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to congratulate you on chairing during the year this Convention's meetings and to assure you of the support of the Algerian delegation.

In this regard, I would also like to thank you for the preparatory work carried out for this meeting and also congratulate the Support Unit for the efforts they have made in order to promote the goals of the Convention in the framework of the mandate which was given to it by the Sixth Review Conference in 2006.

My delegation fully shares the statement read out by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned countries.

Today, our meeting has to deal with two points: first, national, regional and international measures aimed at improving the biosafety and biosecurity, including security and safety of work in laboratories and security of pathogens and toxins; and second, the matter of monitoring, education as well as increasing the awareness and elaboration of the Code of Conduct.

These are the topics which, no doubt, mean that it is very important for us in order to decrease the danger of biological warfare. Unfortunately, that is always there.

Biological sciences have made great progress and obviously today there are various achievements available; the terrorists are interested [*stet*].

The discussion held here at the Group of Experts from 18-22 August 2008 has made it possible to find ways of acting in order to strengthen the positions of the Convention in the area of biosafety, biosecurity, strengthening our capacity, risk management, supervision of science education, as well as increasing the awareness (?) of the agents and elaborating a Code of Conduct.

Our country is in favour of discussion on these two topics and attaches great importance to the improvement of biosafety and biosecurity, as well as increasing the awareness of the Algerian scientific community with regard to experimentation.

I must tell you that there was a focus group set up by the Algerian Government in order to adapt the national law and legislation to the requirements of the Convention. In this area, we had to strengthen the legal framework for the utilization and movement of biological agents or any hazardous materials.

This was not easy because it requires first of all the setting up of the necessary procedures and mechanisms. They also have to follow the Convention. And finally it has to correspond to the specificity of each State.

Dealing with the Code of Conduct to be adopted or developed by the professionals and scientists, it should not slow down scientific research nor should it also impinge upon the legitimate right of States Parties to the purchase of equipment or materials or biological substances.

The elaboration of necessary laboratory standards in the areas of biosecurity and biosafety requires a particular effort in international cooperation and assistance to be provided to those countries which are not quite at the same level. In this, the universality of the Convention should be reflected. The document distributed by Non-Aligned countries is fully supported by us and is worthy of the attention of this Meeting.

Our meeting continues after the decision by the Sixth Conference held in 2006 and the intersessional procedure decided by that Conference.

It makes it possible for us – in fact it is a chance, it is an opportunity to consider what parts of the Convention have been already implemented. This is particularly important when considering the review now foreseen in 2011.

However, the Convention is limited in scope because it does not have a verification mechanism. I would like here to express the hope that the result of this meeting could help States Parties to take the next step in multilateral negotiations and have a legally binding instrument, given the threat with which we are all concerned.

Algeria is very keen on full and balanced implementation of all parts of the Convention. The idea is to have, in a stable and positive manner, eliminated the risks which are targeted by this Convention.

In particular, it is committed. Today we reiterate our commitment never and in no case to manufacture, stock or purchase or keep microbiological agents or toxins unless it is for licit or pacific purposes.

It is fully committed to prohibit the utilization of such toxins or agents and will impede transfer to States which are not participating.

At the same time, we exhort those few States that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so in order that this Convention be truly universal.