



CHAIR OF
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT



GROUP OF NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT
AND OTHER STATES PARTIES
TO THE BWC

**STATEMENT BY MS. ANAYANSI RODRIGUEZ CAMEJO,
MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
CUBA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENT AND OTHER STATES PARTIES TO THE
BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AT THE 2008
MEETING OF STATES PARTIES**

(Please check against delivery)

Geneva, 1st December 2008

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to the Convention.

At the outset, allow me on behalf of the Group to congratulate you on your assumption as Chairman of this Meeting of States Parties. At the same time, we assure you the support of our Group for the success of this meeting.

We would like to commend also the preparation work you have done previously, as well as the positive role played by the Implementation Support Unit, according to the mandate given by the Sixth Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group recalls the XV Ministerial Conference of the Non Aligned Movement, held in Tehran, from 27th to 30th of July 2008, in which the Ministers of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC):

- Reaffirmed that the possibility of any use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins as weapons should be completely excluded, and the conviction that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind.
- Recognised also the particular importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding Protocol and universal adherence to the Convention. They reiterated their call to promote international cooperation for peaceful purposes, including scientific-technical exchange.
- Underlined further the importance to maintain close coordination among the NAM States Parties to the Convention and highlighted that the Convention on Biological and Toxin Weapons forms a whole and that, although it is possible to consider certain aspects separately, it is critical to deal with all of the issues interrelated to this Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

Mr. Chairman,

The BWC was the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In consequence, the Group would like to reaffirm its conviction that the BWC, as well as other international instruments banning all other weapons of mass destruction, is essential for the maintenance of international and regional peace and security.

The high importance the Group attaches to an effective and verifiable BWC, implemented in a comprehensive manner, cannot be overemphasized. The members of the Group have consistently addressed this particular issue as a crucial element for regional and global peace and security.

In this regard, the Group remains deeply concerned about the potential use and/or threats of use of biological agents and toxins as an instrument of war and terror. The Group feels that there is a greater necessity and urgency for the States Parties to the BWC to work towards strengthening and improving the effectiveness and implementation of this Convention so that together we can fully address this concern.

While acknowledging the significance of Article X of the Convention, the Group also underlines the importance of paragraph 54 of the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties of the BWC, in which they were encouraged to provide information on how Article X is been implemented.

Mr. Chairman,

At this stage, we are finishing the second year of the program for the 2007-2010 Intersessional work. In this case, the current session is devoted to the national, regional and international measures to improve biosafety and biosecurity, as well as oversight, education, awareness raising, and adoption and/or development of codes of conduct with the aim of preventing misuse of bio-science and biotechnology research for purposes prohibited for the Convention.

On these two important topics, our Group would like to share some points:

1. Keeping in mind the provisions of the Convention and their strict implementation, the Group welcomes the discussions on biosafety and biosecurity concepts, in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention.
2. While biosafety is a well known and widely-accepted concept, the interpretation and meaning of biosecurity could diverge depending on whom and under which circumstances is used.
3. Biosafety, as is generally understood to mean, is the set of practices and technologies aimed at protecting people from the hazards of occupational exposures to pathogens and toxins.
4. On the other hand, biosecurity is generally understood to be related to the measures taken to guarantee the protection of the biological material, technologies and information from loss, theft, misuse, diversion or intentional release.
5. We strongly believe that the relevant national authorities should have the responsibility in defining and implementing such concepts, in accordance with relevant national laws, regulation and policies, consistent with the provisions of the Convention.
6. While some International Organizations, for instance the World Health Organization (WHO), deal with biosafety and biosecurity issues, the adoption of decisions and recommendations on this matter within the framework of the BWC belongs exclusively to the States Parties of the Convention.
7. Achieving necessary standards in the fields of biosafety and biosecurity requires and is facilitated by international cooperation and strengthening the implementation of Article X of the Convention.
8. The Group would like to emphasize that Codes of Conduct by themselves are not sufficient for preventing the potential use and/or threats of use of biological agents and toxins as an instrument of war and terror. The development and adoption of such Codes would be effective and useful, when complemented with the involvement and assistance of the

national scientific community. However, it remains the prerogative of the States Parties to decide on the content, promulgation and adoption of the code in accordance with relevant national laws, regulations and policies, consistent with the provisions of the Convention.

9. Codes of Conduct should avoid any restrictions on exchange of scientific discoveries in the field of biology for prevention of disease and other peaceful purposes. Subjecting scientific research and the free flow of scientific information to undue restrictions may amount to violation of obligations undertaken under Article X of the BWC. Therefore, all necessary precautionary measures need to be taken *to avoid hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties to the Convention or international cooperation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities*, while devising national codes of conduct.

In connection with the previous ideas, we reiterate our conviction that facilitation of and participation in the fullest possible exchanges and enhanced international cooperation under Article X of the Convention, aimed at facilitating economic and social development, are the key elements to strengthening the implementation of the Convention as a whole.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, the Group looks forward productive discussions next year on Article X, which the Group attaches the highest priority.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

