

**Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)**  
**Annual Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 4-8 December 2017**

**GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

***Statement by Ambassador Farukh Amil***  
**Head of Pakistan's Delegation**  
**Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations and**  
**Other International Organization in Geneva**

Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the 2017 Meeting of BWC States Parties. We appreciate the extensive informal consultations undertaken by you and remain confident of reaching substantive outcomes under your leadership. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

We commend the work being done by the Implementation Support Unit with its modest resources and staff, and thank them for all the substantive and logistic arrangements that they have put in place for this meeting.

We welcome Samoa that has recently joined the Convention as the 179<sup>th</sup> State Party.

Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan ratified the BWC in 1974 as a non-possessor State. We remain committed to its full and effective implementation, for which we have instituted comprehensive legislative, regulatory and administrative measures.

We attach great importance to the safety and security of biological agents, facilities, technologies and equipment. Taking necessary steps in conformity with BWC and the International Health Regulations, Pakistan has introduced stringent bio-safety and bio-security measures.

We have strengthened our export controls and brought them in full conformity with the Australia Group as well as other multilateral export control regimes. Pakistan's comprehensive reports to the UNSCR 1540 Committee provide a detailed matrix of information on all these procedures, mechanisms and legislations as well as on their enforcement.

Pakistan is also part of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and has developed a five-year GHSA roadmap to achieve the Agenda's eleven targets with a view to countering biological threats, whether naturally occurring, accidental or deliberate.

Mr. Chairman,

BWC is the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of WMDs. We deeply value its contribution to global security. This aspect of the Convention needs to be preserved and strengthened.

Pakistan also shares the concerns regarding the possible use of biological weapons, including by non-State actors.

Our top priorities in the BWC context are: *one*, the universalization of the Convention; and *two*, enhancing the implementation of all its Articles in a balanced, non-discriminatory and comprehensive manner.

Pakistan believes that the most effective method of strengthening the BWC and enhancing its implementation is through the conclusion of a legally-binding Protocol dealing with all the Articles of the Convention and including a multilateral verification mechanism. Without prejudice to the priority that we attach to the conclusion of a legally-binding Protocol, my delegation will continue to engage constructively to explore progress where consensus is possible.

Mr. Chairman,

We attach special importance to Article X of the Convention concerning transfer of knowledge and technology for peaceful uses of biology. In recent years, advances in the field of biological sciences have opened up new avenues for the peaceful application of bio-technology as well as international cooperation in this area. The fulfillment of our obligations under BWC and the establishment and maintenance of effective bioethics, bio-safety and bio-security standards as well as focus on dual use education, should contribute towards enhancing international cooperation.

We believe that there is an urgent need for States Parties to work together to develop procedures to promote full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X. In this regard, Pakistan supports NAM's proposal for developing an Article X compliance mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

The discussions on strengthening the "implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties" during the last Inter-Sessional Programme has helped in developing a better collective understanding of this issue.

We believe that it is extremely important for affected States Parties to receive timely and adequate assistance. The provision of such assistance should not be conditional on the action or finding by the UN Security Council with respect to the investigation of alleged use. Assistance should be provided promptly on the basis of the request by the affected state. This requires a detailed mechanism for catering to such requests in a timely and effective manner.

Concrete and practical measures in this regard should be considered by the States Parties including the proposal by Russia for the operationalisation of mobile bio-medical units. We are pleased to note that the joint proposal by France and India, co-sponsored by Pakistan, on the "establishment of a database for assistance in the framework of Article-VII of the Convention" was agreed at the last Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan values the importance of holding regular reviews of the developments in science and technology related to the Convention. We support a States Parties-led, inclusive and representative mechanism under the Convention for regularly reviewing science and technology related developments. Pakistan believes that S&T review should provide impetus not only to enhanced awareness regarding the risks posed by new technologies, but also towards enhanced international cooperation and sharing of such technologies for peaceful purposes. We firmly believe that the potential dual-use nature of emerging technologies in itself should not be used as a pretext for proscribing or restricting their availability to developing countries for permitted purposes.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan participated in the Conference on global bio-security challenges hosted by the Russian Federation in Sochi last month. It gathered a broad cross-section of stakeholders from governments, academia and civil society. We found it useful for deliberating on contemporary issues related to the BWC and for developing a better common understanding. The Workshop co-organized by Malaysia and the US last week in Geneva was also valuable for exchanging ideas and experts' perspectives on recent developments of relevance to the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan participated actively in the 8<sup>th</sup> Review Conference held last November under the able leadership of Ambassador Gyorgy Molnar of Hungary. Pakistan joined China in presenting two Working Papers on the development of a template for biological scientists' code of conduct; and the establishment of a non-proliferation export control and international cooperation regime under the BWC framework.

At the 8<sup>th</sup> RevCon, along with Australia, we also served as the 'Friend of the Chair' on the future Inter-Sessional Programme (ISP) and prepared inputs for the President after holding extensive consultations. Pakistan was ready to go along with the proposal for the ISP tabled by the President as CRP-3, even though it did not meet all our expectations. We were disappointed that an agreement could not be reached on an ISP. That task was delegated by the RevCon to the 2017 MSP.

We will engage with all States Parties constructively in order to find agreement on a robust ISP for the period 2018 to 2020, in accordance with our mandate. We welcome the valuable inputs provided by Cuba as well as jointly by the Russian Federation, UK and USA. Pakistan is of the view that the ISP should meet the expectations of all States Parties including on the need to discuss a legally-binding Protocol with verification measures. Also, the schedule of inter-sessional meetings should not be too onerous for developing countries and the authority to make decisions should continue to rest exclusively with the RevCon.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by reassuring you of our constructive participation in this meeting.

I thank you.