Statement by H.E. Ambassador Li Song

at the 2019 Meeting of States Parties to the BWC

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to sincerely congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship for the 2019 Meeting of States Parties to the BWC. I am convinced that, with your rich experience and outstanding abilities, you will surely guide our meeting to a positive result. The Chinese delegation will do our utmost to support your work.

We welcome the ratification of the Convention by Tanzania, thus becoming the 183rd State Party. We are glad to see the increasing universality of the Convention, and call on countries that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

With rapid development and wide application of bio-technology, the issue of bio-security is getting more prominent in global security governance. While benefiting from the dividend of bio-technology development, we are also faced with daunting challenges such as misuse and abuse of bio-technology, weaponization of bio-technology and bio-terrorism. In the face of this profound change with both hope and risks, the international community should work together in a common effort to strengthen the authority and effectiveness of the Convention, which should be the purpose of the Meeting of States Parties.

2019 marks a critical year for the current intersessional process. At the Meetings of Experts in August, in-depth discussions were conducted on issues such as developments in science and technology, cooperation and assistance, national implementation and institutional strengthening of the Convention. There are a lot of experience and best practices to draw upon, and a lot of measures and initiatives to promote. On the other hand, we must recognize that with half of the intersessional process left, results are few and far between. In particular, on core issues such as formulating a legally binding protocol that includes a verification
regime, a certain State Party has continued to challenge the merits of the protocol and stood in the way of the negotiations, while at the same time pointing fingers at other countries’ compliance of the Convention. We hopes that all parties will use this meeting as an opportunity to fully demonstrate good faith and flexibility, strive to seek common understanding, and lead the intersessional process and the 9th Review Conference in 2021 to positive results. China supports efforts from all State Parties in this regard.

During almost three years of the intersessional process, in order to strengthen the effectiveness and universality of the Convention, China has put forward two proposals, namely the development of a Model Code of Conduct for Biological Scientists and the establishment of a Biological Non-proliferation Export Control and International Cooperation Regime. We believe that these two initiatives are conducive to improving guidance and regulation for bio-science and research activities, to ensuring a balance between biological non-proliferation and international cooperation, and are in line with the common interests of the international community. We hope that all parties will actively support them. We are willing to continue listening to all suggestions with full attention, in order to further improve the proposals. With an open and pragmatic attitude, we will also carefully study proposals from other parties.

Furthermore, to promote the intersessional process and share the experience of the Chinese scientists, during this year’s Meeting of Experts, the Chinese Foreign Ministry and the Chinese Academy of Sciences jointly organized a side event on capacity building of bio-safety laboratories. We hope that relevant exchanges have benefited all participants.

Mr. Chairman,

China has always firmly supported the purposes and objectives of the Convention, and has strictly fulfilled its obligations under the Convention. In order to alleviate the financial difficulties facing the Convention, in spite of a drastic increase of contribution assessment scale which exceeded our budgets, China has paid its 2020 contributions in full ahead of schedule.
China is continuously advancing the modernization of its governance system and capability. In the field of bio-security, China has steadily pushed forward legislative process, with a view to using sound laws to ensure good governance, promoting institutional and capacity building and more effectively implementing its international obligations including those under the Convention. At present, relevant legislative draft has been submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress for deliberation.

China actively puts into practice the concept of a global community of shared future for bio-security, and strives to provide public goods to the international community, so as to share the development dividend of bio-science and technology. To carry forward the good tradition of South-South cooperation, in November this year, the Chinese Foreign Ministry and the Chinese Academy of Sciences jointly held the 3rd Biosafety management and Technology Training Course in Wuhan Institute of Virology, to help developing countries train research personnel in the field of prevention and control of communicable diseases. We are willing to continue our close cooperation with the ISU of the Convention, to help improve the implementation of the Convention and capacity building at the global and regional levels. Next year we will hold a high-level seminar on this topic in China, and we welcome all parties to the event.

Mr. Chairman,

As the old Chinese saying goes, sail together in spite of difficulties and make concerted efforts towards a common goal. China will work with the international community to continuously improve the universality, effectiveness and authority of the Convention, deepen international cooperation on bio-security, advance the development of multilateral biological arms control, and build a global community of shared future for bio-security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.