Statement of Montenegro

The Meeting of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)

General debate

Geneva, 4-7 December 2018

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on assuming your Presidency. We particularly commend your personal commitment towards strengthening the Convention and overcoming its financial challenges. We thank the ISU for its valuable work.

Montenegro has aligned itself with the statements to be delivered by the European Union. Please allow me to point out certain elements in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is one of the key pillar in disarmament and non-proliferation. Its achievements in the past decades are certainly great success, however, our further commitment to counter the threats of acquisition and use of biological and toxin weapons by States or non-State actors should continue to be strong and decisive. The modern technology and science represent challenges to the BWC regime but in the same time necessary and very important tools in our defense against biological weapons. Today, the States Parties in the partnership with other stakeholders, in inclusive manner, must ensure that incredible advances in science and technology are applied responsibly and in peaceful purposes.

The great success of the Convention has been the overall level of compliance of States Parties with its provisions. However, the absence of any formal verification regime represents a limit for the effectiveness of the Convention. Therefore, the work on the confidence building measures and increasing transparency is of the utmost importance. Also, the reason of our concern remains possibility that biological and toxin weapons can be developed, produced and come in hands of non state actors, and our common responsibility is to prevent that.

Montenegro strongly advocates for full universalization of the Convention and underlines the need of the acceleration of progress towards that direction. We welcome the recent ratification of the Convention by the Central African Republic.

We consider that further progress in the implementation of Convention requires intensive international cooperation which includes sharing of experience, knowledge, best practices, as well organizing international exercises and workshops.
Mr. President,

We all witnessed how this year's meetings of experts provided comprehensive and very constructive discussion and exchange of views. We do believe that substantive intersessional process is crucial for strengthening the Convention and express our support for its continuation in the same manner.

Financial stability and predictability are of the key importance for convening the agreed BTWC meetings and for ensuring the continued functioning of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU). We welcome all efforts in that direction and, through responsible national contributions we will provide our support.

Mr. President,

We do believe that national implementation of the BTWC obligations and strengthening of national capacities is fundamental. In November 2016, the Government of Montenegro set up a National Coordinating Body for Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. The said body is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the Action Plan for Resolution of the UN Security Council 1540 and the National Action Plan for the Protection against HBRN Threats and Risks, as well as the implementation of other international initiatives related to weapons of mass destruction, including the BTWC. The representatives of Montenegrin competent national institutions participated in a number of training exercises and workshops at national and international level. In order to evaluate and verify the mentioned Strategy, it was organized the staff exercise named "RESISTEX". The exercise was held in duration of 4 days in Podgorica, in February 2018, with a participation of 34 persons from ministries, agencies and institutions that comprise the National Coordinating Body for Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. The training was assisted by representatives of DTRA, US EUCOM and RACVIAC. In cooperation with the Robert Koch Institute from Berlin, two workshops were held in Montenegro in 2018, and we express our gratitude for its support. We use this opportunity to inform that the representative of the Institute for Public Health of Montenegro was also one of the participants during the Peer Review Transparency Visit at the Richard Lugar Center for Public Health Research in Tbilisi, Georgia, in November 2018.

In the end, rest assured that Montenegro remains highly committed to the successful outcome of this Meeting.

Thank you.