Highlights of Talk Points: MX 1 Chair Maria Teresa T. Almojuela

International Workshop on Cooperation and Assistance Under Article X of the Biological Weapons Convention

Session V. Considerations for the way ahead

Hotel Beau Rivage, 22 June 2018

This is a timely and highly-useful activity that should help delegations as they prepare for the Meetings of Experts in August, particularly MX1. The chairs of the MXs and 2018 MSP have circulated a letter with the agenda for the MXs, which include all topics listed in the 2017 MSP outcome document, and with the invitation for States Parties to submit working papers by 15 July. The working papers will indicate the enthusiasm of States Parties to discuss particular topics in detail. Chairs’ role is to facilitate in-depth discussion the consideration concrete proposals in the working papers, within the given timelines.

With reference to the 7 topics under MX, the salient points would be:

Topic 1 – to examine content of Article X implementation reports and consider there is a need for standardization

Topic 2 – further enhancements to the database, drawing from highly functioning databases. Also need consideration of capacity support to developing countries to conduct needs-assessment and to participate meaningfully in this cooperation platform

Topic 3 – member states are expected to submit working papers to reiterate previous observations and proposals

Topic 4 – no proposals have been made on “guidelines and procedures for mobilizing resources” but the approach and guidelines, as shown by examples cited in this workshop, would depend on the intended use of such resources.

Topics 5,6 and 7 are very dense, but inter-linked. There are many partnerships that exist already attesting to potentials under these topics. An important consideration that has been pointed out in previous meetings is to determine and develop activities/programs within the BWC context that is not already being pursued outside. There are opportunities for engaging industry and academe/scientists – possibilities have been cited in this workshop - that have yet to be explored.

The holding of side events during the two days of MX1, outside the meeting hours, will be useful.

It is important (1) that there are concrete proposals and (2) to look at the ISP (2018-2019) as a continuum, that is, the discussions in in the MX1, whether there are outcomes or not, will be taken forward, in the next two years, in the build up to the 2020 RevCon.

UN Secretary General’s disarmament agenda

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres issued this year a call for a new disarmament agenda that “saves humanity, saves lives and secures the future
generation. Key elements in “Securing Our Common Paper”, provide a good reference for our work in the ISP, particularly, MX1:

1. **Institutionalization** - BWC is the least institutionalized among disarmament instruments. Institutionalization of the BWC, particularly Article X implementation, requires the following: robust structures for cooperation, sustainability and predictability, and anchoring the engagement for developing states parties.

2. **Disarmament and development**  – the SG’s disarmament agenda calls for a strong correlation between disarmament and development. The implementation of Article X provides the opening for States Parties to contribute to the SDG agenda. The potential for biotechnology to address climate change, pollution, outbreak of diseases, food security challenges etc is limitless. What is important is for BWC States Parties to identify practical activities that are scaleable, within BWC mandate, and do not repeat what is already being done elsewhere.

3. **Partnerships**  – this is a major theme of the UN SG disarmament paper. Under MX 1, there are 3 topics where discussions on partnerships will be pursued – with and among international organisations, academe and industry. As cited in the example of the CWC education and outreach program, outreach activities are crucial in building a community of experts, scientists and professionals who understand their stakes in the BWC regime, and to develop enabling platforms for cooperation.

4. **Regional cooperation**  – one guidance in the disarmament agenda is to reinforce existing cooperation at the global level by aligning them clearly and strongly with regional cooperation mechanisms. Regional mechanisms are often more dynamic, more rooted, more robust, and sometimes more effective in improving operational national/global capabilities and establishing self-sustaining arrangements. Moreover, regional arrangements take into account the different contexts, risks and challenges that regions face.

As final remarks, let me state the following:

- that some proposals to be presented may be in their exploratory phase and will take some time to discuss, while others may be more ripe and ready for development; the UNSG paper cited ripeness of opportunities, particularly in global health.

- that it is important to achieve balance in the progress of implementation of BWC articles, and that outcomes from the MXs reflect this balance

- at the end of the ISP, we hope to have clear and well-developed deliverables for consideration in the 9th RevCon that all States Parties can support.