



Statement by the Chairman of the Nigerian National Authority on Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions Gabriel Tanimu Aduda Permanent Secretary Political and Economic Affairs, Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation at the meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Biological and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. Geneva, December 2017

Mr. Chairman,

The Nigerian delegation congratulates you on your election as the Chairman of the 2017 meeting of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We assure you of our support and express our confidence in your ability to steer this session to a successful outcome.

2. Nigeria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by His Excellency, Jorge Valero, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman

3. Nigeria reiterates its strong commitment to the principles and provisions of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We also reiterate our deep commitment to the peaceful use of biology in all its ramifications. We underscore the importance of the prevention of the use of biological and toxin agents as weapons. As well we are concerned about these agents falling into wrong hands. For this reason, we must, as States Parties, prioritize the resumption of multilateral

negotiations towards strengthening the Convention in a comprehensive and balanced manner, including through a verification mechanism.

4. The position of my delegation has not changed on core issues relating to the convention, including the importance of achieving universality, which is a major requirement for realizing the objectives of the convention. In this regard, we wish to restate the importance of the full and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X and its provisions relating to exchange of technological and scientific knowledge and assistance amongst States Parties' to build capacities to enhance the implementation of the convention.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Capacity building improves the ability of State Parties to evaluate and address crucial questions related to modes of implementation among development options, based on the understanding of potentials, limitations and specific needs. Therefore, we call on States Parties that have the capabilities and opportunities to open multilateral and bilateral channels for exploration in achieving the goals of Article X. We implore all States Parties possessing advanced biotechnology to adopt positive measures to promote technology transfer and international cooperation on an equal and non-discriminatory basis, particularly with countries less advanced in this field. The establishment of a Cooperation Working Group would be a significant step in instituting a dispute settlement mechanism.

6. We believe that this meeting provides an invaluable opportunity for us to make vital progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Nigeria has demonstrated strong political will with the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Council on Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions with memberships drawn from across all relevant state and non-state actors that play one role or another in the management and implementation of Biosafety. The BTWC recognises that safety, particularly biological safety, is an important international issue. States Parties are encouraged to accept and to develop national codes of practice for the safe handling of pathogenic microorganisms in laboratories within their territory.

8. The National Authority had developed a framework for Nigeria which had been distributed to all agencies and laboratories handling pathogenic microorganisms. This framework has been forwarded to the Federal Ministry of Justice for transposition into a bill for eventual enactment. Although Nigeria now has biosafety law and Biosafety Management Agency, it is more concerned with regulation of application of recombinant technology which poses a grave danger where ever misapplied or misused. The implementation of the **BTWC** is highly sensitive and complicated. Hence the constant call by Meetings of States Parties for collaborative efforts and synergy amongst all critical stakeholders.

9. We believe that through these channels, we would be able to achieve the universalisation of the Convention. And Finally, Mr. Chairman, My delegation stands ready to support all processes and initiatives aimed at strengthening the implementation of the BWC.

10. I thank you.