General Exchange of Views

Mr. Chairperson,

We deeply appreciate the commendable manner in which you are leading the preparations for the Eighth Review Conference (RevCon) of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We welcome Angola and Cote d’Ivoire as States Parties to the Convention. The first session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), held from 26 to 27 April earlier this year, provided a useful opportunity to all delegations to share their priorities and expectations from the RevCon. Several States Parties also introduced concrete proposals in the form of working papers. The credit goes to you, Mr. Chairman, for facilitating an interactive discussion during the first session of the PrepCom on these various proposals. It certainly led to a better understanding of the different working papers and laid a solid foundation for further substantive work in the lead up to the RevCon.

Pakistan is co-sponsoring two Working Papers for the RevCon, submitted by China, on (i) the development of a template for biological scientists’ code of conduct; and (ii) the establishment of a non-proliferation export control regime under the BWC framework. Pakistan has worked extensively on these areas. We have instituted comprehensive legislative, regulatory and administrative measures including Codes of Conduct to regulate life sciences in Pakistan, to enhance our bio-safety and bio-security regulations, and to strengthen our export controls on biological agents and toxins. Pakistan’s robust domestic export control regime is at par with the best international standards.

We hope that all States Parties will be able to see the value of a universal and inclusive export control regime, as well as the utility of a template for national codes of conduct that could be adapted and modified by any interested State Party according to their own circumstances. The adoption of these two proposals by the RevCon will go a long way in strengthening the implementation of the Convention. We sincerely hope that all States Parties will be in a position to support them.
Mr. Chairperson,

Pakistan attaches special importance to strengthening the implementation of Article-X. 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 this Article. In this regard, Pakistan is working within NAM to develop and present a concrete proposal for the establishment of a mechanism on Article X implementation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Pakistan remains committed to the full and effective implementation of BWC. We deeply value its contribution to global security and its potential for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of biology. Our top priorities include the universalization of the Convention and the effective and balanced implementation of all its articles including Article-X.

The forthcoming RevCon provides an opportunity to review the implementation of all articles of the Convention, with a view to strengthening them in a balanced and comprehensive manner. Pakistan believes that the most credible and sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a legally binding Protocol, including on verification provisions, dealing with all the Articles of the Convention.

Pakistan, however, recognizes the difference of opinion among States Parties over the need for such a legally binding Protocol. In the absence of consensus on this matter, my delegation will continue to participate constructively in the discussions on the various agenda items to explore progress where consensus is possible, by focusing on areas that unite us.

Mr. Chairperson,

Pakistan values regular reviews of the developments in science and technology related to the Convention. We note the significant interest in this subject that is evident from the number of proposals that have been presented. Pakistan believes that S&T reviews should provide impetus not only to enhanced awareness regarding new technologies and risks, 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. Any process established under the BWC for reviewing science and technology related developments must be led by States Parties, and be inclusive and representative.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Final Document of the 7th BWC Review Conference held in 2011 embodied a delicate balance that should be preserved in the Final Document of the forthcoming 8th Review Conference. We look forward to working with all States Parties in developing a robust and forward looking Final Document.

We take note of the numerous concrete proposals that continue to be submitted by various States Parties in the form of Working Papers. We are viewing all proposals with an open mind and giving them close consideration in the capital in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. We will support proposals that strengthen the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner. You can count on Pakistan’s active, positive and constructive participation in the Review Conference and its preparatory process.

Pakistan has had the distinction of presiding over the Sixth Review Conference where the ISU was established. The ISU’s utility in the context of implementation and follow-up of the BTWC is clear. WE thank its small team for its efficient work.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.