Islamic Republic of Iran

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Before
The Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons (BTWC)

Geneva, 7 December 2018
Mr. Chairman,
At the outset let me congratulate you for your assumption as the chair of this important session. I would like to assure you of our fullest cooperation. I would like to associate with the NAM statement as delivered by distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela.

Mr. Chairman,
The last Review Conference mandated the MSP in 2017 to identify topics to be discussed during the ISP leading to the next review conference to be held in 2021. The mandate of the ISP remained unchanged as we agreed to discuss, promote common understanding and effective action on those topics identified. To this end, we were able to discuss very preliminary in the expert meetings held in August this year, a number of issues of importance. This meeting allowed getting better understanding of the views of member states. While a detailed discussion was held under various agenda items, but this discussion showed that still we need to elaborate further on issues of high importance, due to difference of positions which are far apart, taking into account the positions of the Developing Countries vis a vis Developed Countries.

A range of proposals has been made in these meetings under various topics. In our parts, we made it clear that we need a plan of action to handle as well systematic restrictions on the exchange of equipment, material and technology for peaceful purposes under Article X, an effective mechanism of assistance in case of alleged biological attack or threat to attack, multilaterally negotiated export controls, as well as benefits of S&T developments, legally binding instrument to strengthen the Convention in its entirety. These proposals are widely shared and supported by NAM as well as many developing Countries. In particular, NAM has already reissued its earlier concrete proposal regarding the strengthening of Article X regulatory aspects, namely establishment of cooperative committee, its plan of action and settlement of disputes on denial transfer cases for peaceful purposes.
Unfortunately chair factual report on Article X has not duly reflected those concrete views of the NAM. This deficit is also applies to other MXs chair reports. We attach great importance to discussions in MX4 and willing to look at the proposals made to strengthen Article VII of the Convention. Since discussions held, it was clear that in our deliberations today, we should avoid a selective approach towards strengthening certain provisions of the Convention, compromising its integrity.

We have to reiterate our position here that the impact of subversion of BTWC without strengthening it, lacking complimentary legally binding document containing balanced package of activities among other things, including verification measures as well as measures for full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X, as envisaged in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group (AHG) negotiating Protocol, would end result in destroying the legal foundation of the BTWC as a long lasting disarmament treaty.

We are much prepared to discuss all proposals that would strengthen the implementation of the Convention in its entirety. Selective approaches to structure discriminatory measures in the absence of legal framework, would result in unbalanced arbitrary implementation of particular Articles of the Convention under which unjustified and unacceptable excuse and/or politically motivated measures such as arbitrary restrictions on the transfer, development and promotion of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge, would be a damage to building trust, confidence and capacity for the State Parties to benefit from new advances in bio-science and biotechnology.

To that end, we should engage constructively to address issues at hand. We have the mandate to address and develop common understanding and effective action on all topics identified in the 2017 MSP. Hence, prioritizing topics to be discussed in subsequent years by expert meeting is neither in conformity with previous practice within the ISP nor justified by the Mandate entrusted to current MSP.

It is matter of serious concern that despite a clear mandate given to the various Chairs on the modalities for the preparations of their factual reports and established practice, Chairs of MXs have been
asked by the chair of the MSP to provide their own summary as “CRP” with suggestions to be considered in this session. In our view, as agreed and reflected in all reports of the chairs, these reports have not been agreed upon and have no status. Hence, we are much looking forward to a consensual outcome taking into account positions expressed by delegations and deliberations held under various topics.

My delegation would like to share the sentiment with those who stressed the importance of financial sustainability of the BWC. In this regard, we would like to highlight the importance of a realistic approach toward this issue. We could not lose sight of the fact that certain policies, including impulsive unilateral coercive measures in the form of financial and banking sanctions imposed by the United States have obstructed some Member States from paying their assessed contributions in a timely manner.

Last but not least, in our view, a confrontational approach with countries that might be in arrears might jeopardize the universality of the Convention and its implementation. To reach a comprehensive solution, we are looking to work with you Mr. Chairman as well as other delegations.
I thank you.