Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)  
(Eighth Review Conference, Geneva, 7-25 November 2016)  

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS  

Statement by Ambassador Tehmina Janjua  
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Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations and  
Other International Organization in Geneva  

Mr. President,  

I congratulate you on your election as the President of the 8th BWC Review Conference. We appreciate the commendable manner in which you led the preparatory process this year. You can count on my delegation’s full cooperation for making substantive progress on further strengthening the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner at this RevCon. We are pleased to be supporting you as one of the Vice-Presidents of the RevCon. I am also happy to assist you as a co-facilitator, in my personal capacity, along with Mr. Ian McConville of Australia, on the “Future intersessional work programme and the ISU”.  

We appreciate the work being done by the ISU with its modest resources and staff and thank them for all the substantive and logistic arrangements that they have put in place for the RevCon.  

We welcome Nepal, Liberia, Angola and Cote d’Ivoire as fellow BWC States Parties.  

Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela on behalf of NAM States Parties.  

Mr. President,  

Pakistan ratified the BWC in 1974 as a non-possessor State. We remain committed to its full implementation, for which we have instituted comprehensive legislative, regulatory and administrative measures. We attach great importance to the safety and security of biological agents, facilities, technologies and equipment. Taking necessary steps in conformity with BWC and International Health Regulations, Pakistan has introduced stringent bio-safety and bio-security measures. We have strengthened our export controls and brought them in full conformity with
the Australia Group. Pakistan’s comprehensive reports to the UNSCR 1540 Committee provide a detailed matrix of information on all these procedures, mechanisms and legislations as well as on their enforcement.

Pakistan is also part of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and has developed a five-year GHSA roadmap to achieve the Agenda’s eleven targets with a view to countering biological threats, whether naturally occurring, accidental or deliberate.

Mr. President,

BWC is the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of WMDs. We deeply value its contribution to global security. This aspect of the BWC needs to be preserved and strengthened.

Pakistan shares the concerns regarding the possible use of biological weapons including by non-State actors. Our top priorities, therefore, should include the universalization of the Convention, and enhancing the implementation of all articles of the Convention in a balanced, non-discriminatory and comprehensive manner.

Pakistan believes that the most credible and sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations towards a legally binding Protocol, including on verification provisions, dealing with all the Articles of the Convention. Pakistan, however, recognizes the difference of opinion over the need for such a legally binding Protocol. In the absence of consensus on this matter, my delegation will continue to engage constructively to explore progress where consensus is possible by focusing on areas that unite us.

Mr. President,

We attach special importance to Article X of the Convention concerning transfer of knowledge and technology for peaceful uses of biology. In recent years, advances in the field of biological sciences have opened up new avenues for the peaceful application of bio-technology as well as international cooperation in this area. The fulfillment of our obligations under BWC and the establishment and maintenance of effective bioethics, bio-safety and bio-security standards as well as focus on dual use education, should contribute towards enhancing international cooperation.
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 supports NAM’s proposal for developing an Article X compliance mechanism.

Mr. President,

The discussions on strengthening the “implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties” during the last Inter-Sessional Programme has helped in developing a better collective understanding of this issue. We believe that it is extremely important for affected States Parties to receive timely and adequate assistance. The provision of such assistance should not be conditional on the action or finding by the UN Security Council with respect to the investigation of alleged use. Assistance should be provided promptly on the basis of the request by the affected state. This requires a detailed mechanism for catering to such requests in a timely and effective manner. Concrete and practical measures in this regard should be considered by the States Parties at the RevCon.

Mr. President,

Pakistan values the importance of holding 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. We support the establishment of a States Parties-led, inclusive and representative mechanism under the Convention for reviewing science and technology related developments. Pakistan believes that S&T review should provide impetus not only to enhanced awareness regarding the risks posed by new technologies, 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.

Mr. President,

We note the several concrete proposals that have been submitted to the RevCon by various States Parties in the form of Working Papers. Some
important issues as well as some promising new ideas have been raised in these Working Papers. During the course of this RevCon, without prejudice to our priorities, we will give careful consideration to all of these proposals in a positive and constructive manner to strengthen the implementation of the Convention across all its articles.

Pakistan participated actively and constructively in the preparatory process of the 8th RevCon. Besides the two sessions of the PrepCom, we also participated in a regional workshop held in Wuxi, China, and a preparatory conference in Wilton Park, UK. We will engage actively during the RevCon to build on the progress achieved during the preparatory process.

Pakistan supports the Working Papers tabled by NAM. Pakistan is also co-sponsoring three other Working Papers, including two presented by China on the “development of a model code of conduct for biological scientists under the BWC” and the “establishment of a non-proliferation export control international cooperation regime under the framework of BWC”; and the joint Working Paper presented by France and India on the “establishment of a database for assistance in the framework of Article-VII of the Convention”.

We hope that all States Parties will see the value and utility of the concrete and practical proposals contained in these Working Papers. In our view, they will go a long way in strengthening the implementation of the Convention in diverse areas. We, therefore, sincerely hope that all States Parties will be in a position to support them.

Mr. President,

Pakistan recalls with satisfaction the successful conclusion of the 7th BWC Review Conference in December 2011, and believes that its Final Document embodied a delicate balance that should be preserved in the Final Document of the Eighth Review Conference. We look forward to working with you and other States Parties in developing a robust, balanced and forward looking Final Document by consensus.

I thank you, Mr. President.