

NON OFFICIAL TRANSLATION



Misión Permanente de la República de Cuba ante la Oficina de las Naciones Unidas en Ginebra y otros Organismos internacionales con sede en Suiza.

Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Storage of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction: General debate

STATEMENT

H.E. Mr. PEDRO LUIS PEDROSO CUESTA.

**AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO
THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH
HEADQUARTERS IN SWITZERLAND**

Geneva, 4 December 2017.

Mr. President,

Cuba congratulates you for having assumed the presidency of the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Biological Weapons, especially as it is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement that chairs this important meeting. We wish him success in his performance and assure him of our active participation and cooperation.

We fully subscribe to the intervention made by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the States Parties of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Mr. President,

Since 2001, in which several years of negotiations that were about to conclude were unjustifiably interrupted by a State Party, the international community aspires to the adoption of a legally binding multilateral Protocol that strengthens the Biological Weapons Convention in a comprehensive manner and balanced, including through a verification mechanism.

That would be the only truly effective and sustainable way to strengthen the Convention and ensure its strict implementation, taking into account the mandate established by the 1994 Special Conference and the subsequent work of the Ad Hoc Group.

The Eighth Review Conference would have been the key moment to adopt a mandate to restart, without further delay, a working group open to the participation of all States Parties, the negotiations of the Protocol, with a view to its formal approval, more take, at the Ninth Review Conference.

However, as is known, the Eighth Review Conference only indicated as a task to the 2017 Meeting of States Parties to try to move forward on substantive and procedural issues for the period preceding the next Review Conference, with a view to achieving a consensus on an intersessional process.

In this regard, Cuba has presented working document BWC / MSP / 2017 / WP.8 as a contribution to comply with the provisions of the Eighth Review Conference. On the other hand, we take note of the various national working documents presented regarding the current meeting of States Parties, and we hope that as part of its outcome, it will be possible to identify by consensus the way to strengthen the Convention in a comprehensive and balanced manner in the period between sessions in view of the Ninth Review Conference.

We also reaffirm the importance of preserving the central role of the Review Conferences in decision-making within the review process of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Mr. President,

Promoting international cooperation, without restrictions or unilateral and discriminatory limitations, for the benefit of the economic and technological development of the States Parties, particularly the developing States, is indispensable to face the current challenges.

Therefore, we would like to recall the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement presented at the Eighth Review Conference aimed at establishing a Permanent Committee for Cooperation, which includes a mechanism for resolving disputes in the context of Article X.

On the other hand, we value positively the proposal of a multilateral mechanism of export control which would be an important step in the elimination of all restrictions on the free exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information, for the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes.

We also appreciate that the review of new advances in science and technology is important to carry out in the context of the Biological Weapons Convention. At the same time, Cuba reaffirms that measures that could limit the exchange or use of agents, materials, equipment and information for peaceful purposes should in no way be derived from the examination of this issue. Therefore, we reiterate that it is necessary to reduce the widening gaps between developed and developing countries in the fields of biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology and other related areas.

In this context, Cuba reaffirms that the main obstacle it faces for a broader and more effective international cooperation and assistance in the field of biological activities is the blockade imposed by the United States for 57 years. In this regard, we will present a working document that includes specific cases of damage caused in that area by the blockade against Cuba, whose laws remain in effect until today.

Mr. President,

I would like to conclude, Mr. President, by emphasizing Cuba's firm commitment to the full, effective and non-discriminatory application of the Convention on Biological Weapons.

All the delegations here present have a great responsibility to identify ways to strengthen the Convention in all its aspects. I reiterate that you can count on the constructive position of the Cuban delegation.

Thank you very much.