



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN

Geneva

Statement

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Annual Meeting of States Parties, Geneva 3-6 December 2019

Agenda item 6. (d) Consideration of the factual reports of the Meetings of Experts reflecting their deliberations, including possible outcomes: (d) Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and has a few additional comments under this agenda item.

We welcome the work carried out in MX-4 this year under the chairmanship of Mr. Usman Jadoon of Pakistan. We take note of the Report contained in document BWC/MSP/2019/MX.4/2, including the Annex prepared by the Chairperson, under his own responsibility, summarizing the discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

The discussions on strengthening the implementation of Article VII during the previous Inter-Sessional Programme helped in developing a better collective understanding of this issue. The deliberations held in MX-4, during 2018 and 2019, further refined the emerging areas of commonalities which should be built upon for distilling concrete deliverables.

It is the responsibility, indeed an obligation under the Convention to provide or support timely and effective assistance in case a State Party has been exposed to danger as a result of violation of the Convention leading to the outbreak of diseases and toxins that may harm humans, animals, plants or the

environment. The provision of assistance under Article-VII 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.

Given the current lack of institutional and operational structures to give effect to Article VII, there is a need to establish a specific mechanism tailored to the specific nature of this Convention's provisions. Concrete and practical measures in this regard should be considered by the States Parties including on the concept of mobile bio-medical units; a Database for assistance in the framework of Article-VII; finalisation of Guidelines and Formats to assist a State Party submitting an application for assistance under Article VII.

It is widely recognized that strengthening the surveillance, detection and response capacities of national health systems would help to tackle both infectious disease outbreaks of a natural origin and also enhance preparedness to mitigate the consequences of deliberate bio-events. States Parties should, therefore, explore the overlap and synergies with Article-X, and consider the establishment of a voluntary fund.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan is making consistent efforts of its own to build the national capacity of its "first responders". Under the National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan's Defense Science and Technology Organization (DESTO) has established a Chem-Bio-Defense Cell (CBDC). We are constantly striving to enhance its capabilities to handle biological related incidents through procurement of requisite equipment and training. While we acknowledge the contribution of other States Parties that have assisted us in that effort, we look forward to increased international cooperation in this field.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation hopes that the work carried out in MX-4 will be duly taken note of, and would serve as a useful guide for the States Parties' consideration at the 9th Review Conference.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
