



## 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. (e) Consideration of the factual reports of the Meetings of Experts reflecting their deliberations, including possible outcomes: (e) Meeting of Experts on Institutional Strengthening of the Convention**

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. Laurent Masméjan of Switzerland. We take note of the Report contained in document BWC/MSP/2019/MX.5/2, including the Annex prepared by the Chairperson, under his own responsibility, summarizing the discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

BWC is the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of WMDs. It has built a robust international norm against the repugnant notion of using disease as a means of warfare. Although membership of the BWC is not yet universal, no State openly claims today that biological weapons are a legitimate means of national defence. We deeply value the BWC's contribution to international and regional security and see it as a vital pillar of the disarmament regime.

Pakistan supports the institutional strengthening of this important Convention by enhancing the implementation of all its articles in a balanced,

non-discriminatory and comprehensive manner. Pakistan is of the view that the most effective method of strengthening the BWC is through the conclusion of a legally-binding Protocol that covers all the Articles of the Convention and includes a multilateral verification mechanism.

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. International cooperation in this area must be promoted and enhanced through an institutional mechanism as proposed by NAM.

BWC continues to be challenged by the absence of an institutional mechanism not only on compliance and verification, but also on response and assistance in cases of deliberate use (Article VII), and on international cooperation in peaceful uses of biology (Article X).

While Pakistan views CBMs as a useful tool for increasing transparency and building trust and confidence among States Parties in the implementation of the Convention, such tools cannot be a means for assessing compliance by States Parties – for which the only method is a multilaterally negotiated, legally binding mechanism with verification provisions.

Mr. Chairman,

The lack of verification provisions, coupled with suspicions of non-compliance and increasing concerns about the implications of certain scientific and technological advances, reinforces the need to seriously reconsider the resumption of negotiations on a legally binding Protocol. It is fundamental to the success of the Convention in upholding the collectively evolved norm that: advances in life sciences, biology and biotechnology are used *only* for the benefit of humanity and *never* as a weapon.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, let me note that, as a State Party that has always met all its financial obligations under the Convention in full and on time, Pakistan welcomes the measures that were put in place last year to address the financial challenges faced by the BWC in a durable and sustainable manner, including by ensuring the continuity of approved programmes and activities and priority treatment for funding the ISU staff contracts.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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