



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva

Statement

**Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of
Pakistan, at the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)
Annual Meeting of States Parties, Geneva
3-6 December 2019**

Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you on your election as the Chairman. We appreciate the extensive informal consultations undertaken by you in preparation for this meeting. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation for reaching substantive outcomes from this meeting.

We commend the excellent work being done by the Implementation Support Unit with its modest resources and staff. We welcome Tanzania as the 183rd State Party to the Convention. Universalisation of the Convention should continue to remain our top priority.

Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by Azerbaijan on behalf of NAM.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan ratified the BWC in 1974. We remain committed to its full and effective implementation, for which we have instituted comprehensive legislative, regulatory and administrative measures. We have formulated a stand-alone national BWC legislation through an inter-Agency process involving all stakeholders. It is currently being processed for the approval of the Parliament.

Pakistan has introduced stringent bio-safety and bio-security measures. We have also strengthened our export controls and brought them in full conformity with the Australia Group. Pakistan's comprehensive reports to UNSCR 1540 Committee provide detailed information on all these mechanisms and legislations as well as on their enforcement. This year, Pakistan conducted three seminars on bio-safety and bio-security for our life scientists.

Mr. Chairman,

BWC is the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of WMDs. We deeply value its contribution to global and regional security. This aspect of the Convention needs to be preserved and strengthened. Pakistan also shares the concerns regarding the possible use of biological weapons, including by non-State actors.

Pakistan believes that the most effective method of strengthening the BWC is through the conclusion of a legally-binding Protocol that covers all its Articles and includes a multilateral verification mechanism. Without prejudice to the priority that we attach to the conclusion of a legally-binding Protocol, my delegation will continue to engage constructively to explore progress under the Convention for its strengthened and balanced implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

We attach special importance to Article X of the Convention concerning the transfer of knowledge and technology for peaceful uses of biology. Recent advances have opened up new avenues for the peaceful application of biotechnology. There is an urgent need for States Parties to work together to develop concrete procedures for promoting the implementation of Article X.

It is an obligation under Article VII 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. The provision of such assistance should not be conditional on a finding by the UN Security Council, including 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 Convention.

Pakistan recognizes the importance of regularly reviewing science and technology related developments. We support the establishment of a States Parties-led, inclusive and representative mechanism. It should not only increase awareness regarding potential risks, but also help enhance cooperation on sharing of new technologies for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation participated actively in the five Meetings of Experts held in August this year. Pakistan also had the honour of providing the Chair for MX-4. The discussions in the five MXs were valuable for identifying commonalities. We hope that these would be duly taken note of by the MSP this year, and would also serve to guide the States Parties' consideration at the 9th Review Conference.

Pakistan meets its financial obligations under the Convention in full and on time. We welcome the measures put in place last year to address the financial stability of the Convention. We take note of the report presented by you on this matter. We stand ready to explore further measures that would put the Convention on a sustainable footing.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
