



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

Statement

FIRST COMMITTEE – 75TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

Statement by Pakistan

Thematic Debate on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction (-- October 2020)

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Conventions prohibiting Biological and Chemical Weapons, the BWC and the CWC, are two important pillars of the international security architecture. They have made significant contributions to the goal of general and complete disarmament by comprehensively outlawing two entire categories of WMDs.

Mr. Chairman,

2. We value the BWC's contribution to global security and its potential for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of life sciences. Our priorities under the Convention include its universalization and the effective and balanced implementation of all its articles, in particular Article-X. Without prejudice to the priority that we attach to the conclusion of a legally-binding Protocol, my delegation continues to engage constructively with the BWC community to explore progress where consensus is possible.

3. On its part, Pakistan remains committed to the full implementation of the Convention. We continue to further strengthen the legislative, regulatory and administrative framework to regulate life sciences in the country. We are enhancing our bio-safety and bio-security regulations. Our export controls on biological agents and toxins are at par with international standards.

4. Pakistan participates actively and contributes constructively to all meetings of the BWC during the current Inter-Sessional Programme. Last year, Pakistan had the honour of chairing the Meeting of BWC Experts on Assistance, Preparedness and Response. We believe Article-VII of the Convention enjoys broad political support and cross-regional convergence. It should therefore be channelled towards concrete deliverables at the next Review Conference in 2021. We would continue to constructively engage with other States Parties during the upcoming Meetings of BWC Experts.

5. Pakistan views the UNSG's mechanism as an important operational tool for investigation. However, neither this mechanism, nor voluntary CBMs can substitute the need for a dedicated verification mechanism for the Convention.

6. Pakistan has always met all its financial obligations under the Convention in full and on time. We support all measures aimed at putting the Convention on a sustainable financial footing.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Pakistan remains committed to the CWC and continues to actively and constructively participate in the work of the OPCW. We firmly believe in preserving the effectiveness, objectivity and credibility of the OPCW and its verification regime. Distortions in the OPCW's mandate that could render it susceptible to political manoeuvring must be avoided.

8. Pakistan condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. Those responsible for such acts must be identified and held accountable. OPCW's role in dealing with cases of chemical weapons' use must be in strict accordance with the Convention, which unambiguously defines the role of the Technical Secretariat. Extending the Secretariat's remit towards 'attribution' is inconsistent with the technical nature of its work. It is for the States Parties to consider issues of attribution in light of the technical findings of the Secretariat.

9. OPCW should be strengthened to deal with the ongoing and future challenges within the confines of the CWC, while according priority to the complete destruction of declared as well as abandoned chemical weapons. The 4th Review Conference offers the best platform to adopt policies that will keep the Convention relevant and strong into the future. We hope that the practice of decision making by consensus on CWC related issues, both at the UNGA and at the OPCW will be restored.

10. We attach high priority to CWC's provisions relating to international cooperation and assistance as well as peaceful uses of chemistry. Pakistan continues to regularly conduct CWC-related regional and international courses and events on various topics.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Along with the threat of chemical and biological weapons' use by States, their use by non-State actors must also be effectively addressed. Pakistan has taken a series of measures in this regard. Our comprehensive reports to the 1540 Committee provide a detailed matrix on all these procedures, mechanisms and legislations as well as on their enforcement. We also support the Russian proposal for the negotiation of an international convention to combat acts of chemical and biological terrorism in the Conference on Disarmament.

12. As a mainstream partner in global non-proliferation efforts, Pakistan has also instituted a strong national export control regime that is harmonized with the relevant international regimes including the Australia Group.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
