

**MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO
THE CONVENTION ON THE
PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT,
PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF
BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) AND
TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR
DESTRUCTION**

9 December 2004

ENGLISH ONLY

Second Meeting
Geneva, 6-10 December 2004
Item 5 of the agenda

PAPER ON SURVEILLANCE¹

Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran

Surveillance is fundamental for the control of communicable disease outbreaks and public health management, covering human, animal and plant. Surveillance could play essential role in an early detection of epidemics. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran supports measures in enhancing national communicable disease surveillance system and related activities as well as similar mechanisms in phytosanitary.

The priorities of health and food policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran are adoption and promulgation of necessary regulations on reporting and responding to the outbreaks of diseases. In the process of codification of national guidelines, the existing international regulations and guidelines specially the ones adopted by WHO, OIE and FAO on surveillance of disease is taken into consideration.

In the fulfillment of this task in an effective manner, special training of national experts on detection, diagnosis, reporting and responding to the communicable diseases is essential. In this regard international organizations and States Parties with advanced capabilities in surveillance are expected to positively respond to requests for technical assistance.

Laboratories have an important role in the surveillance of communicable disease. The States Parties to the Convention and the relevant international organizations, through technical and financial assistance and by equipping national and regional reference laboratories could promote this role to a great extent.

Information technology facilitates rapid collection of data, their analysis and timely distribution of data. Transparency of the related activities of States Parties would be enhanced by using international health and sanitary regulations and guidelines and would accelerate exchange of information among States Parties. National coordination and interaction among the human health and animal and plant sanitary authorities are vital in the promotion of the public health.

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The relevant international organizations and bodies (WHO, OIE, FAO and ICRC) within their mandates on monitoring global public health and humanitarian assistance, regardless of epidemic sources, could play a coordinating role in providing and mobilizing technical and financial assistance and aids. It is essential to note that these organizations shall not, through engaging in activities such as politically and/or security oriented investigations, act beyond their mandate. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that the enhancement of the national surveillance system in each country would strengthen global health.

The past Review Conferences of the BWC particularly the Third one, has urged the States Parties to the Convention, in implementing their undertaking under Article X, to take specific measures within their competence for the promotion of the fullest possible international cooperation in this field, through *inter alia*:

- Transfer and exchange of information concerning research programs in bio-sciences, and greater cooperation in international public health and disease control;
- Wider transfer and exchange of information, materials and equipment among States on a systematic and long-term basis;
- Active promotion of contacts between scientists and technical personnel on a reciprocal basis, in relevant fields;
- Increased technical cooperation and assistance, including training programs to developing countries in the use of bio-sciences and genetic engineering for peaceful purposes through active association with United Nations institutions, including the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology;
- Facilitating the conclusion of bilateral, regional and multiregional agreements providing, on a mutually advantageous, equal and non-discriminatory basis, for their participation in the development and application of biotechnology;
- Encouraging the coordination of national and regional programs and working out in an appropriate manner the ways and means of cooperation in this field.

In conclusion, the Islamic Republic of Iran, fully supporting any international measures in enhancing national capabilities for surveillance, is of the belief that international organizations and bodies such as WHO, FAO, OIE and ICRC should not be engaged in BWC investigation issues, since this:

1. would be in serious contravention of their competencies, because of differences of membership in different organizations and the list of States Parties to BWC;
 2. would challenge their neutrality and impartiality;
 3. would divert the much needed scarce resources available to health related projects, specifically in developing countries; and
 4. would hamper the fulfillment of their main mandate (public health and humanitarians assistance).
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