

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

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Statement of China

Submitted by China

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, congratulations to you on your Chairpersonship of the Meeting of States Parties of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The Chinese delegation will render you full support and work with all other delegations for a positive outcome of the meeting. China would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the Republic of South Sudan's accession to the Convention.

Mr. Chair,

Biosecurity knows no borders, and the future of all countries are intertwined. Faced with biosecurity challenges that are increasingly sophisticated and serious, China pursues the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and true multilateralism, and supports the strengthening of the BWC and the very foundation of global biosecurity governance.

Last year, the Ninth Review Conference decided to establish a Working Group on the strengthening of the Convention, providing fresh opportunity and a new platform for cooperation among States Parties. At this year's Working, Group meeting, States Parties reaffirmed their political will to strengthen the Convention, exchanged views extensively regarding verification, compliance, scientific and technological developments and international cooperation. Many States Parties brought forward constructive suggestions.

At this opportunity, I thank the good work of the Chair, the Vice Chairs, Friends of the Chair, and the Implementation Support Unit. China is ready to participate in the intersessional process in a constructive manner.

Mr. Chair,

Biosecurity risks are a collective challenge for the international community, and strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) mechanism serves the common interests of all parties. Currently, the urgent matter for States Parties is to comprehensively fulfil the mandate of the Ninth Review Conference, and to further build consensus, make joint efforts and translate political will into action.

First, a verification mechanism needs to be built through negotiation at an early date. Like the majority of States Parties, China believes that the fundamental way to strengthen the BWC is to conclude a legally-binding protocol through multilateral negotiations and build an impartial and effective verification mechanism.

In this regard, States Parties have broad political consensus and historical ground for negotiations. China has submitted its working paper, and looks forward to working with all sides to make full use of the Working Group and to accelerate discussions regarding the core elements of the verification mechanism, including its framework, negotiation basis and



technical complexities, thus laying foundation for the Tenth Review Conference to decide on the resumption of relevant negotiation.

Second, compliance concerns need to be addressed in an impartial manner. The bio-military activities carried out by certain countries around the globe has caused concerns. Relevant countries ought to make adequate clarification. China supports continued deliberation of related issues by the States Parties. Contention among States Parties over compliance in recent years have further highlighted the necessity and urgency of establishing a verification mechanism of the Convention.

Prior to the establishment of a verification mechanism, China supports enhancing mutual trust and addressing concerns through necessary intermediary measures. For example, increasing the universality of submission of declaration materials under the CBMs and improving the declaration form, especially through adding the item of "military biological activities conducted by a State Party on the territory of other States", to enhance the completeness and accuracy of declaration materials. Having suggested as such, we believe that the authority of the BWC could not be upheld through these fragmented measures alone. It ultimately needs to be upheld by an effective verification mechanism.

Third, biotechnology needs to be utilized for the welfare of humankind. We should coordinate security and development during the BWC strengthening process. China supports the initiatives put forward by the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) States Parties, prioritizes the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Article X, and the promotion of peaceful uses. Building compliance capacity is but one aspect of international cooperation. Outstanding demands of the developing community should be given priority. Institutional guarantee should be provided to ensure that States Parties enjoy rights that are commensurate with their obligations, and that developing countries' legitimate rights to peaceful uses of technology are not corroded.

The resolution entitled Promoting International Cooperation on Peaceful Uses in the Context of International Security has been adopted by the 76th and 77th sessions of UN General Assembly, calling for the promotion of peaceful uses of science and technology, inter alia, in biological field, urging relevant countries to lift excess regulation in accordance with it. China and co-sponsors will submit this resolution again at the 79th session and welcomes the participation of States Parties in the follow-up process of the UNGA.

Mr. Chair,

China is dedicated to responsible R&D of biotechnology and strengthened biosafety and risk management. The Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists is a result of cooperation and common endeavour of governments and science communities. We encourage all stakeholders to co-sponsor and support it on a voluntary basis. During this meeting of States Parties, the Tianjin University and City University of London will co-host a side event and welcome the participation of all sides.

In November 2023, the Wuhan Institute of Virology of China Academy of Sciences held the seventh International Workshop on Biosafety Laboratory Management and Techniques. After its establishment in 2017, this workshop has become an important platform for exchanges, mutual learning and capacity building among developing countries. China stands ready to keep up communications with all sides regarding laboratory regulation, technical standards and best practices.

China is also ready to work with interested parties to step up bilateral cooperation on biosafety policy making, risk assessment, emergency response, information sharing and capacity building

Mr. Chair,

As always, China will take an active part in global biosecurity governance, work with the international community in defending and strengthening the BWC, make a joint response to biosecurity challenges and contribute to the security and development of the world.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.