
**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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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of the factual reports of the Meetings of Experts
reflecting their deliberations, including possible outcomes**

**Difficulties and obstacles faced by Cuba for the full
implementation of Article X of the Biological Weapons
Convention.**

Submitted by Cuba

1. Cuba emphasizes the importance and necessity of the full, effective and non-discriminatory application of Article X of the Convention for the economic and technological development of all States Parties. Compliance with its provisions is fundamental to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention and its accomplishment could bring tangible benefits in the field of biology for peaceful purposes to us all.
2. The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America (hereinafter US) against Cuba for almost 60 years, constitutes an obstacle to international cooperation.
3. The unilateral restrictions and extraterritorial laws applied by the US Government, by virtue of the blockade imposed on Cuba, constitute a violation of Article X of the Convention, under which States undertake to "... facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins" ... and "to avoid hampering the economic or technological development of the States Parties to the Convention or the international cooperation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities ...".
4. It is unacceptable that the US Government limits, restricts and even prohibits in multiple occasions, the free exchange of equipment, technologies, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of biological agents and toxins between Cuba and other States Parties, which constitutes, without exception, a right to all Parties.

**I. What is the effect of the blockade on Cuba's national
implementation of Article X of the Convention, regarding the
economic and technological development of the States
Parties?**

5. Until March 2019, the damages accumulated for almost six decades of application of the blockade reached the figure of 138 thousand 843.4 million USD, at current prices. Taking into account the depreciation of the dollar against the value of gold in the international market, the blockade has caused a measurable damage of more than 922 thousand 630 USD.



6. The biopharmaceutical sector has been one of the engines of Cuba's economic growth and exports, in recent years. The biotechnology sector in Cuba has demonstrated its capacity to develop innovative products, medicines, equipment and high technology services aimed at improving the health of the Cuban people, the generation of exportable goods and services, and advanced technologies for food production, many of them have been shared in our collaboration and solidarity actions with other States. The products generated by the biopharmaceutical industry, mainly in the biotechnology field, are among the main items with the possibility of entering the United States market, due to its novelty, its high added value and the existence of a potential demand in this country.

7. The blockade prevents US citizens from benefiting directly and without violating laws of their country of biotechnological and pharmaceutical products developed in Cuba. It also prevents Cuban citizens from accessing American products. In the period between March 2018 and March 2019, the Cuban Import and Export Company of medical products MEDICUBA S.A., made requests to 57 US companies in order to acquire necessary supplies for the Cuban health system. To date, 50 of these companies have not responded and another 3 have claimed that, due to the blockade regulations, they are not authorized to sell any medicine or equipment to Cuba.

8. Concrete examples of the damages caused by the blockade in this sector are:

- Cuban authorities contacted the American company PROMEGA CORPORATION, manufacturer of enzymes and other products for biotechnology and molecular biology, with the aim of buying reagents and supplies used in the diagnosis of genetic diseases. On January 16th, 2019, the supplier announced that "the US Treasury Department applies commercial sanctions that prohibit that industries based in the US sell products and provide technology or services to Cuba."
- The American company BRUKER was contacted for the acquisition of a spectrophotometer, equipment used in laboratories for the quantification of substances and microorganisms. The Company responded that, until today, they have no possibility of doing business with Cuba.
- The Institute of Tropical Medicine "Pedro Kouri" (IPK) received a refusal from the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare at their request to access funds for projects offered by this English institution. The Federation said that, due to the sanctions imposed against Cuba by the US Government, they cannot make financial transactions to the Island.
- The East BIOCUBAFARMA Pharmaceutical Laboratory Company had its parenteral serum production affected due to the lack of packaging material. The Colombian supplier PROENFAR was contacted to obtain these supplies. However, having a US shareholder, the operation could not be completed, affecting the production of 1 million 995 thousand 300 bags of serum.

II. Why should States Parties be involved in guaranteeing the end of this type of unilateral measure contrary to the Convention?

9. The 8th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention recalled that "... States Parties have a legal obligation to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins, as well as the right to participate in said exchange, and also have the obligation to avoid hampering the economic and technological development of the States Parties... "

10. The unilateral prohibitions and restrictions entailed by the blockade against Cuba are clearly incompatible with the provisions of the Convention, in particular, with the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X. It is the obligation of States Parties to achieve its purpose and objective, including the elimination of measures of this nature.

11. Cuba reiterates its firm commitment to the strict application of the Convention in all its aspects and calls for the unilateral and unconditional lifting of the US blockade, in compliance with the 27 resolutions adopted by the international community in the UN General Assembly, where its Member States have called for an end to such absurd policy.
