



**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations
Geneva**

**Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi at 2nd Meeting of the Working
Group on Strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**

**“Measures on international cooperation and assistance under Article X”
07 August 2023**

Mr Chair,

I thank you for ably steering this Working Group and for the extensive outreach ahead of this meeting.

We also commend the ISU staff for their professionalism despite the modest resources at their disposal.

We thank representatives of several organizations for the presentations on their valuable cooperation programs.

Mr Chair,

Half a century since the inception of the BWC, we find ourselves in an environment that is increasingly shaped by major transformations in life sciences, revolution in technology and variety of actors. The breathtaking pace of these developments offers new avenues of cooperation but also carries risks.

The fifty-year milestone is therefore an important occasion to reflect how to ensure BWC’s continued relevance and efficacy.

The establishment of this Working Group represented a system reset for the Convention to leverage its full potential and to contemporize it in ways that it is able to measure up the promise and perils in the decades ahead.

The BWC, though an arms control treaty, represents a careful balance between its regulatory and promotional pillars. This balance needs to be maintained including in the work of the Working Group.

As the 9th RevCon also decided, the measures to be designed and developed by this Group in a manner that their implementation supports international cooperation, scientific research and economic and technological development, while avoiding negative impacts.

Mr Chair,

In this backdrop, we welcome the fact that the Group is commencing its work with **international cooperation and assistance (ICA) under Article X** followed by **Science and Technology developments**.

The ICA envisaged under Article X of the Convention can harness the benefits of biological sciences and technologies for peaceful purposes while also help in mitigating the associated risks.

The UN Secretary General, in his policy brief for New Agenda for Peace, has recommended to the States Parties of this Convention to explore the potential implications of advances in biotechnology, neurobiology and related converging technologies.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the fragilities of the global public health architecture and its disproportionate impacts on developing countries. Apart from the intersecting issues of life sciences, viruses and infectious diseases, the pandemic highlighted how lack of access to and use of diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines led to loss of lives and livelihoods. The pandemic was therefore yet another reminder that global biological and health security was and would be as resilient as our weakest link.

Therefore, international cooperation and assistance related measures under Article X can and should capacitate both promotional aspects of the Convention as also biosafety, biosecurity as well as dual-use oversight.

Mr Chair,

That said, we should not ignore the development dimension of Article X as well, which holds a significant value for a large number of States Parties of the Convention. Access to and use of life sciences and related technologies remain

critical to the socio-economic well-being of developing countries in sectors such as public health, sustainable agriculture, and environmental protection.

For these countries, faithful implementation of Article X obligations remains critical to strengthening of the Convention. We have a real opportunity to deliver meaningfully on ICA and pave the path to substantial progress on other work streams of this Group.

Mr Chair,

We reaffirm our support for the consistent call by developing countries that international cooperation and assistance under Article X should:

(1) be responsive to the needs in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information regarding the use of bacteriological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes;

(2) overcome obstacles hampering effective implementation of Article X;

(3) catalyse necessary resources, including financial resources, in order to facilitate the widest possible exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information, in particular to developing States Parties;

(4) facilitate the development of human resources in developing States Parties; and

(5) coordinate cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations.

The Working Group would now need to focus on how to move beyond these discussions to deliverables.

With these considerations in mind view, we have taken the initiative to submit a working paper containing a tangible “**Proposal for Cooperation and Assistance Mechanism under Article X**”. We will be introducing our Working Paper later under the discussion on Article X Mechanism.

Mr Chair,

Finally, it is gratifying to see several proposals that are aimed at revitalizing, operationalizing and contemporizing the Convention. We welcome fresh ideas and constructive engagement that gives us reasons to be cautiously optimistic.

Developing common understandings on international cooperation and assistance under Article X in early stages of our Working Group will provide us with a solid foundation to strengthen and revitalize the BTW Convention that is fit for purpose for 21st century.

I thank you.
