



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF  
NIGERIA ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP DURING THE  
GENERAL DEBATE ON COMPLIANCE AND VERIFICATION  
AT THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON  
STRENGTHENING THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS  
CONVENTION**

**4 TO 8 DECEMBER, 2023  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON BEHALF OF THE  
AFRICAN GROUP MEMBER STATES THAT ARE STATES PARTY TO THE BIOLOGICAL  
WEAPONS CONVENTION AT THE WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON  
STRENGTHENING THE CONVENTION IRO COMPLIANCE AND VERIFICATION**

Thank you for giving me the floor.

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

**Mr. Chair,**

The African Group reiterates its support as you continue to guide our work towards concrete outcomes. We are confident in your abilities to ensure that this Working Group fulfils its mandate.

We thank the ISU and all the panelists for their presentations as we seek to chart a progressive path for the success of this WG.

**Chair,**

Compliance and verification are fundamental elements key to the implementation and actualization of the objectives of the Convention. The inability of the Convention to comprehensively monitor and verify compliance levels by Member States remains one of the major impediments to the full implementation of the BWC. Therefore, in the absence of any concrete mechanism to fill these voids, bio-related activities carried out by Member States would continue to remain shrouded by ambiguity and prone to misconceptions, including misperceptions. Therefore, it is imperative that Member States begin to engage constructively on the possibility of adopting pragmatic measures to promote compliance and verification within the Convention.

**Chair,**

The African Group reiterates its stance that biological-related activities carried out by States must be in consonance with the rules and objectives set out by the Convention. In this regard, the Group recalls the inability of Member States to reach consensus on the establishment of a BWC verification mechanism in 2001. We further recall the willingness demonstrated by States Parties to establish such a mechanism, including over the review conferences and working group engagements. In this regard, the African group takes note of the initiative of some States Parties

to host a series of peer review exercises which could constitute a tool for strengthening the implementation of the convention by creating a unique platform to exchange mutually beneficial information and share best practices.

The Group is of the view that, while no single mechanism may be sufficient to achieve verification or assess compliance, the establishment of an all encompassing legally binding mechanism could largely promote strict adherence to compliance and verification obligations within the framework of the Convention. In this regard, the modalities for the establishment of such a mechanism should be further elaborated within the framework of this WG in an inclusive, comprehensive and balanced manner, to ensure that the concerns of all Member States are taken onboard and adequately addressed.

Ultimately, the proposed mechanism would ensure that States carry out their activities in line with the provisions of the Convention, while also boosting the easy detection of questionable activities by States Parties in order to ensure accountability.

**In conclusion, Mr. Chair,**

The African Group urges Member States to reconsider previous positions and embrace constructive dialogue to facilitate concrete outcomes.

I thank you.