



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
NIGERIA ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE ON CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES
AT THE 3RD 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 CONFIDENCE BUILDING AND
TRANSPARENCY**

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 commends you, Excellency, Ambassador Damico on your approach to conduct the Meetings of the Working Group on Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention. Rest assured of our full support throughout this process.

We also extend profound gratitude to the ISU for its insightful presentation on CBMs, and we are optimistic that their valuable contributions could assist this WG in its quest to fulfill its mandate. Most emphatically, the Group recognizes the recent project of the ISU to support African States to effectively implement the BWC, particularly in the area of strengthening national stakeholder identification and establishment under the Convention. This valuable 4-year project which began in 2023 will certainly contribute to the efforts of the African region to fully implement the Convention.

Chair,

Advancements in the area of bio-technology continues to be shrouded by uncertainty due to the possible manipulation of biological research. As the world continues to witness the emergence of new technologies in the area of weapons development and sophistication, it is quite evident that biosecurity and biosafety have become crucial elements to the sustenance of the human race.

Cognizant of the potential hazards posed to humanity by the aforementioned, States Parties would no doubt agree that, it has become a matter of urgency to strengthen the BWC, including its full and effective implementation.

Chair,

The African Group is aware of the sovereign rights of Member States to pursue research and development in the area of bio-technology. However,

we are also of the strong view that such activities must be conducted on the basis of peaceful uses in a responsible and transparent manner in line with the provisions of the Convention.

Notably, the 2nd review conference of the BWC in 1986, took a principled decision on the establishment of CBMs under the Convention, thereby creating a path for the improvement of international cooperation in the area of peaceful biological activities.

Chair,

The African region remains one of the most concerned about the potential impacts of biological threats. Our willingness to continue to pursue the peaceful uses of biotechnology is testament to our collective resolve to promote biosecurity and biosafety in the African region. Therefore, the Group wishes to underscore the importance of combating increasing threats of terrorism in the area of Biological weapons proliferation.

In this regard, we view Confidence Building Measures, including CBM reports as a global mechanism for the acquisition of new information and updates about activities in relevant sectors which are important for national planning purposes.

We wish to further state that CBM reports constitute a means by which States Parties can gain useful information for evaluating compliance levels of States to their treaty obligations in the absence of a substantive verification protocol. The Group believes that CBMs promote transparency in the implementation of the Convention, until the adoption of a legally binding instrument with verification provisions. Therefore, they cannot serve as a tool to assess compliance.

The importance and function of transparency within the framework of the Convention further justifies the need for States Parties to embrace pragmatic collaborations to facilitate the full implementation of the Convention and continue to utilize CMBs as a means to promote transparency and build trust amongst one another.

In conclusion, Chair,

The African Group urges States Parties to demonstrate the political will to strengthen the Convention and facilitate the establishment of a global mechanism to enhance CBMs. Our collective responsibility remains the preservation and sustainability of mankind. Therefore, this WG must strive to

present feasible recommendations for the establishment of such a mechanism that would ensure that the biological activities of States Parties are carried out on the basis of transparency and considerations for the needs and sensitivities of developing States with dissimilar capabilities, while promoting international cooperation on Peaceful Uses under the Convention. I thank you