



Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United
Nations Office and other international organizations

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Before
The 9th Review Conference of
the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of
Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons (BTWC)
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Mr. President,

At the outset I would like to extend my congratulations to you, on your election as the President of the 9th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Rest assured of my delegation's full support and constructive cooperation. We associate ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the NAM and other State Parties.

Mr. President,

The BWC is an indispensable instrument in international endeavors to ban and eliminate weapons of mass destruction. The Convention has succeeded in setting a strong legal norm against biological weapons.

While cherishing the Convention and remaining committed to its full implementation, Iran strongly believes that the Convention needs be strengthened. The pandemic displayed what is at stake as a result of a natural or intentional outbreak of an infectious disease. We need to capitalize on this momentum to act forthwith, for the next health crisis or indeed other major crises might be around the corner in today's complex, interconnected and interdependent world. Probably, the most important lesson learned from COVID-19 is the need for stronger and swifter collective preparedness and response against biological threats.

Mr. President,

Iran along the solid majority of States parties believes that for strengthening the Convention in a comprehensive manner it is imperative to establish a credible institutional mechanism in the form of a new legal instrument. To this end, we fully support the resumption of negotiations on a comprehensive legally binding protocol. Such a Protocol can provide necessary assurance that all States Parties would fulfill their obligations under the Convention.

One State party, and only one, blocked the negotiations on the protocol two decades ago and still continue to object to the resumption of negotiations for such a protocol. We urge the United States to act responsibly and consider the consequences of its unjustifiable position against the protocol which has placed the Convention in jeopardy.

Full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of legal obligation of States parties, under Article X, to facilitate international cooperation, assistance and exchange in biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes is essential to achieving the objectives and purposes of the Convention.

Effective national implementation of the Convention to a great extent requires building capacities in the area of surveillance, detection, diagnosis, preparedness, response, containment and mitigation. Building such capacities in many developing countries depends on international cooperation and assistance and facilitation of access to and availability of biological related equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes.

Iran supports the proposal by NAM on the establishment of a cooperation committee with a view to ensuring multilateral cooperation among all States Parties for peaceful purposes in an effective, full and non-discriminatory manner.

The existence of restrictions, limitations as well as unilateral coercive measures including economic, trade and financial sanctions have created serious obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes. Such restrictive measures and unilateral sanctions are in breach of the undertaking, under Article X, to implement the Convention in a manner not to hamper the economic and technological development of other States Parties.

States parties should explicitly commit not to impose or maintain, under any circumstances, restrictions, limitations and unilateral coercive measures and sanctions

on trade in such areas as medicines, vaccines and medical countermeasures, diagnostics, biological agents, equipment and materials for peaceful purposes in particular for treatment of patients.

Iran condemns the illegitimate imposition of unilateral coercive measures by the U.S. against certain BWC States parties and urges the U.S. to promptly comply with its obligations under Article X of the Convention and to immediately lift all unilateral coercive measures which directly or indirectly affect the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes.

The review of S&T developments within the context of the Convention should have tangible results for the developing States. The Ninth Review Conference of the Convention should focus on ways and means of maximizing the actual benefits of new S&T advancements in the field of bio-sciences, including approaches for increasing availability and promoting access to and use of the new technologies and know-how by developing countries in order to reduce the existing gaps between developing and developed BWC States Parties.

Mr. President,

Strict and unreserved observance of the principles, objectives and provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol by all States is vital to exclude the possibility of the use of biological weapons. Regrettably, the BWC does not explicitly prohibit the use of biological weapons. This, indeed, is a legal deficit and gap in the Convention. Iran calls upon the Ninth Review Conference to reaffirm the importance and urgency of incorporation of explicit prohibition of the use of biological weapons in the Convention, and consequently, the need for amending the Title and Article I of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Universality of the Convention is very important. We welcome the accession of Namibia as the 184th State Party to the Convention. We support the continued efforts to promote universalization of the Convention. The continuing refusal of the Israeli regime to accede to the BWC must be a matter of serious concern to all, given the facts and figures regarding this regime's malign behavior in the Middle East region.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Iran wishes this Review Conference to hold fruitful deliberations and conclude successfully with the adoption of a balanced and result-oriented consensus outcome.

I Thank you Mr. President.