

Thailand's National Statement at the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. Let me start by congratulating you, **Ambassador Leonardo BENCINI**, on the assumption of your chairmanship. We are confident that your able leadership and experience will guide us toward constructive deliberations and successful outcome of this Review Conference. Our appreciation also goes to the **Implementation Support Unit (ISU)** for their hard work and support to facilitate the implementation of the Convention and the preparation of this Conference.

2. Thailand associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and ASEAN.

Mr. President,

3. It has been almost five decades since the BWC entered into force. The Convention remains **a strong pillar in the global security architecture**. By upholding the norm against the existence of biological weapons, the BWC is considered **an achievement** of the international community in underpinning **a pathway towards delegitimising other Weapons of Mass Destruction**.

4. Despite the achievement, we continue to face the **risk and threats associated with biological pathogens**. While the development of bioscience and technologies for peaceful purposes are encouraged by the BWC, the same technologies have also increased **the risk of non-State actors acquiring and misusing biological weapons**. **The escalating tensions between several of the major powers** have also resulted in an increase of concerns amongst the global community. **Various pandemics** the world has faced in recent years, including the COVID-19, which has led to devastating loss of human life as well as the slowdown of the economic development, is a great reminder for us of **how vulnerable we are to these biological threats**.

5. This 9th Review Conference is timely for States to **reaffirm their commitments** towards the obligations under the BWC that they will **never in any circumstances use, develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain** the biological weapons. We must also concert our efforts to **strengthen the Convention** – to ensure that **the purposes of the Convention are being realised**. In this regard, Thailand reaffirms its commitment to the BWC and wishes to reiterate the following three points:

6. First, in this changing global context, it is crucial to make the Convention **stronger and more enforceable**. We look forward to **concrete measures** to support the implementation of the Convention – **an effective work-plan** for the next five years. In this regard, Thailand hopes that we can continue our discussion on the **establishment of a much-needed effective, transparent, systematic and professional verification mechanism**, similar to that of the Chemical Weapons Convention, necessary to enable the BWC to remain relevant to the current fast-changing political situations.

7. Second, in this same context, **Confidence-Building Measures are keys to forging trust amongst States**, as this will allow a truly **effective global bio-security regime**. Thus, Thailand continues our close collaboration with the ISU and consistently submits our **Confidence-Building Measures (CMBs) report**, and would like to encourage other parties to do the same.

8. Third, as we have witnessed during the COVID-19 crisis, the borderless of the nature of biological threats makes it **impossible for a single State to tackle these threats alone**. Therefore, we call for a **collective effort for the international cooperation**, including effective communication and sharing of knowledge, **as well as assistance and capacity building** in various fields. These include scientific and technological transfer to address **emerging challenges**, *inter alia* in the **scheme of global health**.

9. In this regard, Thailand welcomes and supports the international cooperation on Bio-related programmes for peaceful purposes in accordance with Article X of the Convention. Thailand's implementing agency – the National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC) has signed **Memorandums of Understanding on bio-related research with Belgium, China, Japan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan**, which place an importance on improving the agricultural sector. Moreover, to keep up with the emerging threat, Thailand is also an **active partner of the US's Biological Threat Reduction Programme**.

10. As national implementation stands at the heart of the Convention, such cooperation and assistance will allow us to have an effective global control of biological weapons. On Thailand's part, legislations and measures have been put in place to ensure **biosafety and biosecurity** and the prevention of the **misuse of pathogen** which also cover all the **dual-use items**. In addition, the BIOTEC also develops training courses to raise awareness on biosafety amongst researchers and students.

Mr. President,

11. In closing, Thailand reiterates once again its **continued dedication** in working with all parties to **strengthen and support the universalisation and full implementation** of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Thank you.