



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

National Statement of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

General Debate

9th Review Conference of the of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

28 November 2022

Check against delivery!

Thank you, Mr. President,

At the outset, the delegation of Timor-Leste congratulates you on your election as the President of the 9th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We would also like to commend you for the hard work undertaken leading to the Review Conference and assure you of the Timor-Leste delegation's full support and cooperation as you guide us in our important work in the coming three weeks.

We wish also to welcome the recent accession of Namibia to the Convention, which brings us closer to achieving universalization of the BWC. In this respect, we encourage States that are not yet a Party to the BWC, especially those with advanced biotechnology, to accede to the BWC.

Timor-Leste aligns itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mr. President,

Timor-Leste has a firm commitment to simultaneous and controlled disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, including biological weapons. We became a State Party to the BWC on 5 May 2003, less than 1 year after the restoration of our independence, affirming our commitment to international peace and security.

Timor-Leste continues to believe in the significance and importance of the BWC and its principal objective of prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons, as an indispensable instruments for ending the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

As a small island developing country and a least developed country, we do not have a big military capacity. Correspondingly, Timor-Leste is a country that does not have any high containment laboratories (BSL-4 equivalent). Despite so, we are fully aware that the effective implementation of the Convention requires every single country's support and commitment.

For us, ensuring the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, such as biological weapons, is critical to guarantee international peace and security. Hence, Timor-Leste, as a principle, supports measures and efforts to strengthen

the institutionalization of the BWC and its effective operationalization and implementation.

Mr. President,

The recent outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately illustrated that States are not prepared when facing worldwide health security. The international community should enhance its readiness to respond to major disease outbreaks.

Timor-Leste is grateful and appreciates the support and assistance it has received from partners, which helps an LDC and SIDS like us to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking ahead, we aim to continue our existing cooperation with partners to further improve the national readiness to respond to future disease outbreaks.

Additionally, we strongly believe that the strengthening of international cooperation for the use of biological agents for peaceful purposes is an important element for the effective implementation of the BWC. In this sense, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more clear that there must be an equitable benefit from international cooperation in this field, in order to ensure appropriate and affordable support for developing countries.

In relation to this, we believe that it is crucial to establish a mechanism to enhance cooperation to mobilize resources under Article X of the BWC. The NAM proposal for a Cooperation Committee is a relevant proposal that could be the basis for further discussions on this matter.

Mr. President,

Timor-Leste views the elements of the BWC as separate issues but each form an integral part of the BWC that must be considered in a balanced and comprehensive manner, in order to effectively implement the BWC.

While recognizing that the resumption of a legally binding protocol will be challenging, we encourage States parties to work together to find a way forward, aiming to strengthen the Convention by providing it with a verification mechanism.

To conclude, we affirm our commitment to engage in a constructive manner during this Review Conference and look forward to a successful outcome of the 9th Review Conference.

Thank you.