

Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention

Statement by Belarus on behalf of the member-states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

5 December 2011

Mr. President,

I have the honour to take the floor to speak on behalf of the member-states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), namely Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.

At the outset allow me to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. The CSTO member-states believe that with your professionalism and commitment you will be able to guide the work of this Conference to the success.

On the eve of the Seventh Review Conference the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CSTO have adopted special statement on the occasion of convening the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. And I have the honour to read out this statement.

Quote «We reaffirm our unequivocal support to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BTWC) which is one of the key multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation mechanism banning the whole class of weapons of mass destruction.

Being guided by the goal of more safer and secure world we reaffirm our commitment to full compliance with all obligations under the BTWC and foremost with the one never in any circumstance to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain this class of weapon as well as biological agents and toxins, designated to use for hostile purposes.

We express hope that in the course of the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties of the BTWC we can elaborate effective steps to increase the effectiveness of the Convention's regime and agree on a set of concrete measures to implement it.

We believe that implementation of the decisions of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties of the BTWC, including convening of annual intercessional meetings with the participation of expert community, constitutes solid basis for adoption of balanced and substantive final document of the Conference.

We consider universalization of the BTWC as a priority task. We are confident that coherent and well-directed efforts are needed to involve into the BTWC all the states without exception. We call upon all the states not parties of the Convention to join it at the earliest possible date.

We are confident that it is necessary to analyze in objective and comprehensive manner accumulated problems in the sphere of biosecurity. At the present time

development of biological science and related threats and risks provide all increasing grounds for elaboration of workable measures aiming at verification of the Convention. We therefore come from understanding that elaboration of the legally binding mechanism for verification of compliance of the BTWC is the most effective way to strengthen the regime of prohibition of biological and toxin weapons and to raise confidence in the BTWC compliance among all the states-parties. We deem it important to continue discussion of this issue in the course of the next intersession period of 2012-2015.

We treat confidence-building measures (CBM) as important instrument to ensure transparency in biological domain. We believe it would be reasonable to continue the discussions in the next intersession period on further enhancement of quantitative and qualitative aspects of CBMs bearing in mind in particular the latest scientific and technical developments.

We are firmly confident that full, comprehensive and soonest emplacement of the BTWC national implementation measures will further strengthen the role of the Convention as an important multilateral disarmament mechanism and will also assist in expanding of international cooperation in the peaceful purposes, as envisaged by Article X of the Convention.

While life science and biotechnology is developing rapidly we consider necessary to focus more closely on the influence of scientific-and-technological advances on the BTWC regime. It would also be useful to consider possible measures to improve the mechanisms of Article V (consultations) and Article VI (investigations).

We support the efforts of the President of the Review Conference Ambassador Paul van den Ijssel aimed at ensuring substantive work of the Conference and achieving its meaningful outcomes.

We are prepared to work constructively with all the states-parties of the Convention to achieve consensus on all major issues of the Review Conference and thus to consolidate international efforts aimed at intensive utilization of the potential of the Convention for the humankind welfare». *End of quote*

I thank you, Mr. President.