



**Statement
of the Arab Republic of Egypt**

**Seventh Review Conference of the
Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**

**Geneva,
5 – 22 December, 2011**

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Mr. President,

Let me at the outset congratulate you on your election as the President of the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Let me assure you that our delegation stands ready to support you in your endeavors to achieve a successful conference. Egypt would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Cuba on behalf of Non Aligned Movement States and Others parties to the BWC.

Mr. President,

Egypt was among the leading nations to sign the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention on the 10th of April, 1972. We believe that the Convention remains a primary multilateral instrument that serves as the foundation for biological weapons disarmament. Egypt has consistently been in the lead in the call for a world free of all weapons of mass destruction; including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. In our immediate neighborhood in the Middle East, we have been relentlessly demanding, and working on, the establishment of an area free of all weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, such calls have not been heeded.

Within this context, and as a confidence building measure for peace and stability in the Middle East, Egypt has already taken steps towards the aforementioned objective by signing and ratifying the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and then signing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; having earlier signed and ratified the Geneva 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. We have taken such steps with the intention that this will lead other countries in the area region to reciprocate and take similar steps in order to build confidence and achieve peace. Unfortunately, this did not materialize despite our best efforts, supported by the vast majority of the international community, and despite numerous decisions and resolutions adopted by several international bodies including the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. President,

As you are well aware, Egypt's efforts have been relentless over the years to achieve the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction particularly

in the Middle East given the region's sensitivity. It is worth reminding that in 1990, Egypt launched an initiative to render the Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction and has repeatedly stressed in various international disarmament fora the urgency to prohibit WMD's in the Middle East. There is reason for optimism. In 2012, a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction will be held in Finland. This conference, as agreed upon in the 2010 NPT Review Conference, will be a valuable opportunity to launch a process that would lead to taking practical and constructive steps towards the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction. We are hopeful that the recent appointment of the facilitator and the selection of the host government will set in motion serious preparation, both procedurally and substantively, for this important conference. We look forward to the successful convening of this conference, with the participation of all States in the region, and its fruition in the establishment of the desired Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President,

Egypt welcomes efforts to promote the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention provided that such efforts would be directed foremost towards the non signatory states who have yet to display the basic political will to be part of a convention that seeks to prohibit an abhorrent category of weapons. In the Middle East, Israel remains the only State in the region not to sign the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention despite calls of the international community to display good faith and sign the Biological Weapons Convention. This continues to be a major source of concern and we call upon the international community to become particularly attentive to this issue given the delicate situation in the Middle East.

Mr. President,

Egypt supports the calls to promote international cooperation, assistance, and exchange in the field of biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with Article X of the Convention. We encourage the consideration of specific mechanisms or other approaches that would enable greater international cooperation and assistance and in the implementation of Article X.

Furthermore, in light of the challenges and risks posed by the rapid advances and developments in the field of biological science, it will be pertinent for the Review Conference to consider measures that could further strengthen the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention. Recent advances in science and technology such as in the fields of synthetic biology, systems biology, delivery technology, nanotechnology, and neuroscience reflect a need to consider measures that would ensure that such scientific advances would not be misused.

Mr. President,

Since the launch of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in August 2007, the ISU has played a valuable role in assisting countries with substantive and administrative issues and has been widely recognized as crucial for the Biological Weapons Convention and its implementation. We believe that the role played by the ISU in this regard should continue, while stressing the need for an equitable geographical representation, and emphasizing the principles of rotation and neutrality.

We also believe that the previous intersessional process has been successful in sharing information and promoting common understanding on various topics related to the Convention. We believe that the next intersessional period should also include the consideration of further topics of relevance to the Convention in order to exchange experiences and encourage information sharing that would be beneficial to all states.

Mr. President,

As a signatory to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, Egypt has continuously participated in the meetings of the Convention. This is a testimony of our support to the Convention and its noble objectives. In this context, we look forward to a successful Review Conference that would help strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations sentiment shared by the Non-Aligned Movement which my country currently presides.

Thank you Mr. President.