



**STATEMENT BY NIGERIA AT THE 7TH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF
THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION
GENEVA 5 - 22 DEC. 2011**

Mr President

As this is the first time the Nigerian delegation is taking the floor under your Presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the 7th Review Conference of the BWC. The zeal and involvement shown prior to the commencement of this Conference goes to explain the depth of your commitment and experience in guiding our work through the three (3) weeks proposed for this review process. Allow me also to add my voice of thanks and appreciation on the visit to this august gathering by St. Nicholas and the gift of chocolate, specially inscribed with first letter of my country's name.

2. Let me also associate my delegation with the statement delivered by Cuba on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) which reaffirmed our Foreign Ministers' position that "the possibility of any use of biological agents and toxins as weapons should be completely excluded".

Mr President

3. As we commence the work of the review of the BWC, with the hope of agreeing to a new programme of work for the next five (5) years, you can count on my delegation's support. It is the desire of this delegation that for this three weeks, we are able to review the operations of the Convention, review relevant scientific and technological developments and their impact on society and consider the very pertinent issue of international cooperation in the field of peaceful use of biological agents

and toxins, in addition to the review for another term the mandate of the ISU.

4. The negative effects of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their eventual use cannot be over-emphasised, particularly as we are in a world that is as prone to natural and man-made disasters as it is today. In addition, the fast moving pace of developments in the life sciences, as has been noted by different delegations, constitutes a threat to the Convention if our review processes fail to recognise this.

Mr President

5. The Nigerian delegation wishes to reaffirm the country's commitment to the BWC and to state that it remains proactive in efforts to ensure the full realization of the objectives of the Convention. The Nigerian government has charged the National Authority on Chemical and Biological Weapons Convention (NACBWC) the responsibility of liaising with both local and international stakeholder organizations for domestication and implementation of the Convention.

6. Nigeria, from the stand point of a developing country, considers the issue of International Cooperation under Article X as very vital to the implementation of the Convention. As is contained in the NAM statement, the importance of international cooperation for the effective and comprehensive implementation of the Convention has since been recognised. It is in this connection that Nigeria would urge this review conference to give this issue some bite so as to encourage its full and effective implementation. If this objective is realised, countries in a similar situation like mine, would have capacity building for our academicians, our biological industry workers and other stakeholders in the field. This is particularly relevant based on the fact that "it is better to teach a man how to fish than to give him fish whenever the need arise".

6. Recognising that the intersessional process has been useful in the overall implementation of the BWC and coupled with the bid to keep up pace with developments in the life sciences, it has however, not been quite easy for countries with small missions like mine to meet up with the demands of other parallel meetings. In addition to funding of experts from capitals to keep up with the pace of these meetings, it is increasingly

becoming more demanding. We suggest that this process be streamlined with reduced number of meetings in order for all to be accommodated.

7. On the issue of National Implementation and domestication, Nigeria, being an avowed advocate of the need to ban the use of biological weapons, having signed and ratified the Convention in 1972 and 1973, respectively, undertook to organise a workshop on national implementation for West and Central Africa in October 2010. Thanks to the collaboration of the European Union Joint Action for BWC and the ISU.

8. Similarly, in the 2nd or 3rd quarter of 2012, Nigeria is proposing to host a national sensitisation workshop on BWC. We therefore would be looking forward to further collaboration and support from the EU, ISU and other interested countries and organisations, including the African States Parties to the BWC.

Mr President

9. This statement will not be complete if Nigeria fails to mention the invaluable role of the Implementation Support Unit in the overall implementation of the Convention. Being a beneficiary of the excellent services of the ISU and considering that the unit, with appropriate mandates structured to accommodate regional concerns, would continue to be relevant, we support earlier calls to give the unit another five year term. This delegation would like to specially recognise and thank the wonderful efforts of Richard Lannene and his team in ensuring that States Parties like mine do not lag behind in the work of the Convention.

10. As we look forward to three weeks of fruitful deliberation here in the cold city of Geneva, I want to once again stress that you can count on the support of my delegation to herald your Presidency to the next level in this review exercise.

11. I thank you all for listening.