



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT THE

SEVENTH BWC REVIEW CONFERENCE

**Geneva,
06 December 2011**

Mr. President,

I congratulate you on your election as the President of the 7th BTWC Review Conference. Since your nomination, we have witnessed your hard work and dedication to make this Review Conference a success. Your efforts were apparent in a number of bilateral visits you undertook this year, including to Pakistan. We are confident that your devotion and commitment will yield positive results. We also felicitate other members of General Committee on their election. As you and your team endeavor to guide this Review Conference towards a successful conclusion, let me assure you, Mr. President, of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mr. President,

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by Cuba, on behalf of NAM and Other States Parties to the BTWC.

Mr. President,

BTWC is an important pillar of the global security architecture, which needs to be preserved and strengthened. Being the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, BTWC reflects the commitment of the international community to non-proliferation and disarmament of biological and toxins weapons. We believe that adherence to multilaterally negotiated treaties is the best way to promote global peace and security. The success of this Convention demonstrates the continuing relevance and importance of treaties negotiated multilaterally on the basis of good faith and equality, while taking into account security interests of all states. This should also show us a way forward to promote the global disarmament agenda.

Mr. President,

Pakistan ratified the BTWC in 1974 as a non-possessor state and remains fully committed to its obligations under the Convention. While emphasizing the effective implementation of the Convention, including establishment of a compliance regime and verification mechanism, Pakistan shares the concerns of the international community regarding the possible use of biological weapons, including by non-state actors. As a state party to BTWC, we are fully cognizant of the potential negative use of biological and toxin agents and our obligations to prevent such use. Pakistan has, therefore, taken a range of comprehensive legal and administrative steps to enhance its bio-safety and bio-security regulations.

Our national regulatory framework includes the Drugs Act 1976, Plant Quarantine Act 1976, Animal Quarantine Act 1979, Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, and Pakistan Export Control Act 2004, in addition to provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code. Pakistan's Strategic Export Control Division regulates strategic exports according to the National Control List 2005, which has been revised in 2011. Pakistan's Bio-safety Rules 2005 and Bio-safety Guidelines 2005 deal with safety aspects of bio-related materials and facilities.

Through an inter-agency consultative process, we have drafted BTWC legislation which will shortly be tabled in our Parliament. This legislation aims to comprehensively prohibit designing, development, manufacturing, stockpiling, transport, import, export, sale, acquisition and possession of biological agents and toxins including their means of delivery. It also envisages an Implementation Authority and Oversight Committee.

Mr. President,

To ensure implementation and compliance, Pakistan has been active in taking necessary and effective administrative steps as well. In addition to establishing a National Focal point in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan has established an Inter-Agency Working Group comprising policy experts and life scientists from both public and private sectors. Biological Research Activities are monitored by a three tiered structure including Institutional Bio-safety Committees, Technical Advisory Committee and National Bio-safety Committee. We have established a National Bio-safety Centre for regulation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and a National Bio-ethics Committee under Pakistan Medical Research Council dealing with all aspects of bio-ethics in Health Sector. In 2010, Pakistan also issued its Guidelines on "Code of Conduct for Life Scientists" for implementation and compliance. These guidelines were shared with the BTWC community in 2010 Meeting of States Parties to the BTWC.

Mr. President,

Pakistan has taken several steps in human, animal and plant health to detect, diagnose and respond to challenges from biological agents. Establishment of major institutions such as the Epidemic Investigation Cell, Public Health Laboratories Network, Provincial Veterinary Research Institutes, National Veterinary Laboratory, National Institute of Bio-technology and Genetic Engineering, Crop Disease Research Program and National Institute of Agriculture Biology are just a few examples in this regard.

Pakistan is also making consistent efforts to build capacity of its "first responders". Under the National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan's Defense Science and Technology Organization (DESTO) has established a Chemo-Bio-Defense Cell (CBDC). Currently, we are striving to enhance its capacity to handle biological related incidents through procurement of requisite equipment and training. While we acknowledge the contribution of the states that have assisted us in enhancing our capabilities, we look forward to enhanced cooperation in the field of bio-capacity building.

In the spirit of South-South cooperation, Pakistan is also ready to share its experience and contribute towards capacity building of other states parties in need, according to its intrinsic capabilities.

Mr. President,

The Seventh Review Conference provides an opportunity to further strengthen all aspects of the Convention. In our view, this can be done in two ways. Firstly, by expanding the membership of the Convention, thereby, ensuring universalization of obligations provided by the BTWC; and Secondly, by enhancing implementation of all articles of the BTWC, in an inclusive, balanced, non-discriminatory and comprehensive manner.

Mr. President,

Pakistan would remain constructively engaged during the next three weeks of our deliberation. While we would provide our detailed inputs in focused discussions, I would like to highlight key aspects of our national approach towards various issues under consideration of this Review Conference:

- We believe in renewing and intensifying our efforts towards Universalization of the BWC as only 9 additional states have joined the Convention in the past five years.

- As a member of NAM and being a developing country, we accord special importance to full and effective implementation of Article X of the Convention. We endorse the proposal submitted by NAM in this regard and look forward to constructive dialogue leading towards positive results.
- Pakistan believes that only a multilaterally agreed verification mechanism can provide the assurance of compliance with treaty obligations. The Final declaration of this Review Conference should underscore this element.
- The BWC inter-sessional process has proven its utility. We should look at ways of improving it further in a manner that ensures balanced consideration of all important issues and that its scope and authority does not transgress into the domain of the Review Conference itself.
- CBMs enhance transparency and trust amongst states parties. However, they cannot be a substitute for compliance measures. Proposed amendments to the CBM forms should encourage submissions by reducing the reporting burden on states parties.
- Pakistan believes in the importance and benefits of regularly reviewing developments in science and technology related to the Convention. The review process should be member-states driven, while benefitting from relevant experts at the same time.
- We acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the BWC ISU, which should continue assisting states parties, according to the mandate given by the Review Conference. The mandate given to the ISU should also determine its future composition, which, if expanded, should be rooted in principles of equitable geographic representation.

Thank you Mr. President