



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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AT

THE SIXTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

(General Debate)

Geneva,
20 November 2006

Mr. President,

It is an honour for Pakistan to chair this Sixth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We congratulate you and other members of the General Committee on taking on the responsibility of steering the next three weeks of what promises to be intense work, in this Review Conference. Following the successful Preparatory meeting in April this year, there are positive expectations from this Review Conference. We look forward to working with all State Parties for an outcome that reflects our common endeavour to strengthen the implementation of the Convention, even as we confront multiple new challenges.

We will all benefit from Ambassador Tim Caughley's experience, knowledge and skills. We would also like to thank Richard Lennane and Piers Millet for their support in the preparatory work.

Pakistan associates itself with the NAM statement delivered by Cuba.

Mr. President,

The BTWC is a key disarmament treaty that underpins the international security architecture. It reflects the commitment of the international community to non-proliferation and disarmament of biological and toxin weapons. The BTWC effectively prohibits the use of biological and toxin weapons. Pakistan is fully committed to these obligations.

We believe that international peace and security can best be maintained by adherence to internationally negotiated treaties. In our view, a multilateral approach, with full participation of all concerned states, offers the best hope for attaining genuine security for all nations.

The BTWC's intersessional process of meetings has kept the multilateral track alive. But the Convention continues to be challenged by the absence of a mechanism for verification of faithful and effective compliance. A number of States Parties have continuing interest in examining this issue. As we await agreement in this area, we should make national implementation effective and enhance scientific and technical cooperation.

Universal access of all States to the BTWC is critical to address the challenges to this regime. We should draw up a plan on how to bring non-party States, within the ambit of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Rapid developments in the life sciences and life-enhancing break throughs in biotechnology have opened new horizons in medicine, health, agriculture, industry and commerce. These advances are creating opportunities to promote applications of scientific discoveries for peaceful purposes under Article X.

At this Review Conference, we should agree on measures for enhanced international cooperation in peaceful biotechnological activities. This would facilitate economic and social development and strengthen implementation of the Convention.

Developments in the life sciences also have the potential of creating new tools of warfare. The BTWC regime needs to control the potentially destructive use of such technologies. Security and oversight of pathogens and mechanisms for disease surveillance and response are urgently required. We need to maintain a balance between negative applications of biosciences and development of technology for peaceful and legitimate purposes. The scientific community is a key player in reducing the risks of the dual-use potential of various technologies. Codes of conduct should aim at preserving the benign uses and stemming the malign uses of biosciences.

Mr. President,

Terrorism affects all nations and societies today. We are all aware of the threat of the use of biological weapons with their potential to kill indiscriminately and massively. We have to prepare for such a contingency.

The BTWC should become a framework for cooperation among nations to eliminate biological weaponization and to fight bio-terrorism.

Mr. President,

This Sixth Review Conference provides us the unique opportunity to undertake a comprehensive article by article review of the BTWC, especially in the context of the new challenges and opportunities offered by the exponential development of life sciences. We should use this Review Conference to raise awareness about the Convention and its prohibitions.

Our experts have participated in the inter-sessional work done since the Fifth Review Conference and have benefited from it. In our view, possible

future inter-sessional work could focus on scientific and technological cooperation and CBMs.

Mr. President,

Pakistan has made significant progress in biotechnology. We have a growing academic and research infrastructure. We have a large pool of scientists who are doing important work in the application of biotechnology in the fields of health, agriculture and food processing.

Pakistan's National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (NIBGE), Centre for Advanced Molecular Biology (CAMB) and the Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB) are pioneer institutions for research in medicine and agriculture.

Pakistan is fully committed to the obligations under the BTWC. Pakistan believes in a stringent bio-safety and bio-security regime. Various statutes are being implemented to check any proliferation and diversion. Biosafety Rules have been finalized and notified for enforcement. A National Biosafety Committee supervises their compliance. It ensures that the conduct of scientists is in conformity with the provisions of the BTWC.

In September 2004, we enacted a comprehensive Export Control Law covering biological and toxin agents. Regulations are being designed to deal with genetically controlled and modified food. We are finalizing specific legislation relating to the implementation of the BTWC.

Pakistan shares concerns about bio-terrorism. Pakistan is in the forefront of the war against terrorism. We voted for Security Council resolution 1540 which includes cooperation in preventing proliferation of biological weapons.

Mr. President,

BTWC is one of the most important of the three pillars of the international security architecture- the others being nuclear and chemical. We have the opportunity to break the holding pattern of the lack of progress in security and disarmament issues.

We are committed to engage constructively in getting concrete and tangible results at this Sixth RevCon- results that will add value to the BTWC and strengthen it as a barrier against biological weapons.

Thank you, Mr. President.