



**CHAIRMANSHIP
NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT
GENEVA CHAPTER**

**2019 MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE
PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF
BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR
DESTRUCTION**

Geneva, 3 - 6 December 2019

Statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapon Convention delivered by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Agenda Item 6: Consideration of the factual reports of the Meetings of Experts reflecting their deliberations, including possible outcomes

(b) Meeting of Experts on Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention (MX2)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other States Parties to the BTWC.
2. NAM notes that there have been recent advances demonstrating the increasing sophistication of synthetic biology, together with other enabling technologies, which have benefits, together with the potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention. All states must conduct such activities in a transparent manner, in order to build the confidence of other States Parties.
3. We also believe that the need to prevent harmful activities should never hamper scientific evolution for peaceful purposes and life-saving achievements like vaccine development. Developing countries, in particular, could benefit from advances in technologies that make vaccine production simpler, faster, cheaper and more efficient. Imposing and/or maintaining unjustified restrictions contrary to the obligations under the Convention on the development of dual-use technology, materials and equipment needed to promote capacity building in the fields of sanitary control, detection, diagnosis and control of infectious diseases, including the production of some vaccines and other biological materials, should be considered a violation of Article X.

4. Concerning the dual use nature of some of the new technologies, the Group is aware that there is a potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention including by programming cells to produce toxins, viruses or other cells which could cause harm, designing and building new or altered pathogenic viruses, the ability to confer mammalian transmissibility to viruses or drug resistance to pathogens, the decreasing genetic diversity and the development of incapacitating weapons and the increasing capacity to deliver biological weapons via the alimentary route.
5. The Group reiterates its position that the dual use nature of these technologies by itself should not in anyway hamper the free and fullest exchange of technologies between the parties to the Convention especially when some developed countries are freely engaged in many activities that rest in the domain of these new technologies in the framework of their bio-defence programs.
6. States Parties should undertake all efforts to prevent actions and decisions within the BWC that would raise obstacles to the development of biological sciences in developing countries.
7. NAM and other States Parties to BWC believe that enhancing scientific and technological understanding will be inadequate if ways and means are not found for technology transfers by the developed countries to developing ones. The unhindered exchange of science and technology in the framework of the Convention is also important in the context of enhanced national implementation of the Convention by developing countries which in many circumstances lack resources –technological, financial and human– required for the effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention.
8. The Group takes positive note of working paper BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/WP.9 submitted by China and Pakistan on a Proposal for the development of a model code of conduct for biological scientists under the Biological Weapons Convention, and working paper BWC/MSP/2019/MX.2/WP.5 submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran on Scientific and Technological Developments of Relevance to the Convention, for further consideration.
9. While the Group recalls its position on proposals related to compliance assessments, it reiterates that such proposals should not distract the attention of States Parties away from strengthening the Convention in all its aspects including the need for a verification mechanism. Effective international action against biological threats needs to be universal, legally binding, and non-discriminatory. In addition, this cannot be achieved without strengthening national capacity.

Thank you.