

**PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

**Meeting of Experts of States Parties to the
Biological Weapons Convention
Geneva, 23rd August 2010**

Statement

by

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to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mr. Chairman,

I join other colleagues in congratulating you on assumption of the Chairmanship of this meeting. As a fellow NAM country, my delegation expresses our pleasure in seeing you in the Chair. I assure you of our full support during the Meeting of Experts as well as the Meeting of States Parties.

India associates itself with the statement made by the delegation of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches the highest importance to the full implementation of all provisions of the BWC. The topic of this year's meetings, i.e. assistance and coordination in case of alleged use of biological weapons is especially relevant. We note that Articles VI and VII of the BWC provide the mechanism for investigation into alleged use of biological and toxin weapons and to provide assistance in such cases.

It is important for this Meeting of Experts to consider all the ramifications if a case of alleged use comes to the fore and how we could enhance the international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreak of diseases.

India has formulated national guidelines on biological disasters in consultation and active participation of experts drawn from various Government departments and institutions. These guidelines cover management of epidemics and pandemics and bioterrorism including agro-terrorism. They have been developed with the aim of providing a holistic, coordinated, proactive and technology driven strategy for management of biological disasters through prevention, mitigation, preparedness and prompt response in the event of natural pandemic or

bioterrorism. Emphasis has been laid on bio-safety and bio-security of valuable biological material.

The second aspect of this year's topic is improving national capabilities for disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis and public health systems, in the specific context of alleged use of biological weapons. We recognize that the institutional mechanisms for combating of outbreaks of infectious diseases remain the same, irrespective of whether the outbreak is natural or a result of deliberate use of biological weapons. However, surveillance and detection of a natural or deliberate outbreak of disease will have implications with respect to the Convention. Facilities for detection, diagnosis, production of prophylactic vaccines and effective treatment need to be developed and established for establishing proper biodefence measures.

International cooperation is an imperative both in cases of investigating alleged use of biological weapons and mitigation and control of the effects of the attack. In this context India would like to stress the importance of full and effective implementation of Article X of the Convention. The BWC State Parties should facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and technology related to the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes consistent with their obligation under the Convention.

India has put in place comprehensive systems for disease surveillance, in cooperation with international organizations including WHO, OIE and FAO. Our experts have made presentations on India's systems in the BWC meetings in the last few years. The primary responsibility for surveillance and combating of outbreak of infectious diseases rests with the States Parties. However, India encourages States Parties to the Convention and the concerned international organizations to provide ready assistance to other States Parties in need for developing national capabilities in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Effective export controls are essential in ensuring that disease causing pathogens and organisms do not fall into the hands of terrorists and are used only for peaceful purposes. India has an effective export control system matching the highest international standards. The export of about 150 micro-organisms and toxins is regulated under India's export control list.

India has submitted information on outbreak of human, plant and animal diseases in the country in its national submission on BWC CBMs in 2007 and 2009. We would be submitting our CBMs for this year soon.

Mr. Chairman,

Our experts have benefitted from the exchanges in the Meetings of Experts during the inter-sessional period following the Sixth Review Conference in 2006. As we complete the inter-sessional period this year, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its satisfaction with the work undertaken in these meetings.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that India attaches the highest priority to the further strengthening of the BWC, ensure its full implementation by all States Parties and to make it universal. We believe that only a multilaterally agreed mechanism for verification of compliance can provide the assurance that all States Parties to the Convention are in compliance of their obligations under the BWC.

Thank you.