

**BWC MEETING OF STATES PARTIES  
10–14 December 2012**

**Monday 10 December, Morning session**

**Transcription**

**CUBA**

First of all we wish to congratulate you on your Chairmanship of this meeting and the work that is being conducted therein. We are very pleased with the leadership of a member country of the Non-Aligned Movement. We are sure that your diplomatic experience and your personal capacity will ensure that this meeting is successful. We wish to offer the support of our delegation at this time in that regard.

Cuba fully supports the intervention made by the Islamic Republic of Iran's representative on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Despite the fact that we will later discuss – in greater detail – our position on a number of different issues on the agenda, we believe that at this time it is essential to make a few initial comments during this general debate.

The Convention on Biological Weapons is to be perceived as a whole: therefore, it is essential that each of its issues be addressed in an interrelated, balanced and comprehensive fashion. These issues may refer to regulation compliance or to promotion efforts.

In that regard, we highlight the importance of negotiating a legally-binding, multilaterally-negotiated, non-discriminatory and appropriately balanced protocol. That protocol should strengthen in all its aspects. We do not understand why such an important step cannot be taken bearing in mind that only one State of the international community is opposed to it.

There have been some comments made in the relevant document and we believe that these efforts are a first step towards a change in this position. As we have reiterated on a number of occasions, my country believes that the full effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X is essential in efforts to achieve the objectives and purposes of the proposals of the Convention on Biological Weapons.

Despite the fact that the Seventh Review Conference was indeed a step forward in that regard, we are concerned at the slow pace of implementation of the decisions taken therein, in particular the low level of offers of assistance and requests for assistance that are included in the database of international cooperation. Even a greater source of concern is efforts to make this contingent on other requests.

We recognise the existence of important challenges for the full implementation of Article X. As has been mentioned by the Non-Aligned Movement, there remain persistent restrictions and unjustified limitations that have been imposed. These restrictions are politically motivated and have been imposed on full exchange of agents, equipment, material and scientific and technological information for the use of biological agents for peaceful purposes. An example of this is the

embargo by the United States against Cuba. In that regard we wish to highlight the importance of a dispute settlement mechanism, particularly for disputes that may arise as a result of denial of transfers and we believe we should move in that direction in the future.

My delegation wishes to reiterate that the Seventh Review Conference agreed to maintain the same format as the previous intersessional period, including analysis of a number of standing agenda items and others as well, after long and complex negotiations. In that regard and for that reason, we do not support any proposal which is aimed at changing that situation. We must maintain balance in our analysis of the agreed issues, as well as the current structure for the debate. This will allow, not only for a successful intersessional period, but will also be an appropriate means of preparing for the Eighth Review Conference. In this regard we believe that your work sets a positive precedent, especially in the context of organizing our discussions in the coming years and, in particular, for the balanced focus and the consensus-based focus.

Another issue that will take our time over the next few days are the Confidence-Building Measures. My country has assessed these clearly as being a tool for transparency: they are entirely voluntary and should never be considered as a mechanism to evaluate compliance of the Convention. The decisions that were adopted with regard to the forms during the Seventh Review Conference are an important step forward because they trim some of the unnecessary information that was being requested from States and also help to clarify ambiguities. Now, sufficient time must be given to States so that they can adapt their reports to those changes, as well as to evaluate their effectiveness.

Cuba wishes to express its conviction that the Convention is of fundamental importance in efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament. This includes the destruction of all types of weapons of mass destruction. The achievement of this objective is pending and sometimes a far-away task. Once again we affirm the determination of Cuba to move forward along that road. At the same time we wish to reiterate our commitment to comply strictly with the provisions of that Convention.