

New

**Statement by
H. E. Mr. Md. Abdul Hannan, Bangladesh Ambassador & PR
to the 2012 Meeting of the State Parties
to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)
(Geneva, 10-14 December 2012)**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of chairmanship of this meeting. Your efforts in regular updating the delegations on preparation for this Meeting are indeed commendable. I thank you for the synthesis paper on the topics under discussion at the Meeting of Experts. You can count on my delegation's fullest support and cooperation in carrying out your responsibilities.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Iran in his capacity as the coordinator of Non Aligned Movement (NAM).

Mr. Chairman,

BTWC is considered as the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Since its entry into force in 1975, the Convention remains the central pillar of the international disarmament regime in eliminating the threat of biological and toxin weapons. The additional understandings reached in seven review conferences over last three and a half decades have further strengthened the effectiveness of the Convention. The convention is one of the successful initiatives by international community in early years of addressing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Rapid advancement in the field of life sciences to use microbes and toxins have made it imperative to remain alert against the threat of biological weapons even today.

Bangladesh has never been involved in production, acquisition or use of biological and toxin weapons. As a state party, Bangladesh remains fully committed to the BWC regime and attaches high importance to the full and effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

Compared to many international disarmament and arms control instruments, the BTWC, with its 166 State parties, has achieved greater universality. However, some key States in the Middle East and in our region are yet to accede to or ratify the convention, which is a matter of concern for all of us. Besides, some developing States, particularly some LDCs, also remains also out of the Treaty. We call upon all these states to consider accession to the convention without delay. In this regard, Bangladesh calls for enhanced international cooperation and support to the LDCs that are yet to join the Convention. This will facilitate their accession to the Convention at an early date.

Bangladesh supports a concerted campaign, over the next couple of years, towards making the Convention universal. The Implementation Support Unit (ISU) can play a coordinating role in this regard. Bangladesh welcomes the recent accession of the Marshall Islands to the BWC which brings the membership of the convention to 166 States Parties.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to achieve the goals and objectives of the convention, we need to ensure full and effective implementation of its Article X. We need to develop appropriate procedures for promoting full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X. It is also important to develop procedures for the settlement of disputes arising from concerns about the implementation of Article X. For countries like Bangladesh, innovations in biotechnology and life sciences are

very important for addressing the pressing development issues. Such innovations could offer our people relief from hunger and malnutrition, from pain and disease, and open the doors of prosperity. Bangladesh needs to apply them in agriculture, health sciences and related fields. We urge for enhanced international cooperation in this area, particularly for technical cooperation. In this context, we underscore the need for implementation of Article X of the convention in its letter and spirit.

Mr. Chairman,

While new science and technology developments have some potential benefits in realizing the goals and objectives of the convention, some developments have potential for uses against the provisions of the convention. In order to effectively respond to the challenges posed by new scientific and technological developments, appropriate technical cooperation, sharing best practices and lessons learned, and adequate resource mobilization between the developing and the technologically advanced developed countries should be facilitated. The State parties should regularly update their national implementation legislation and regulations for meeting such challenges. Education and awareness-raising among the relevant stakeholders about the risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology are also important to ensure the implementation of the convention.

Bangladesh recognizes the need for national capacity building in the fields of bio-safety and bio-security; for disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis; and for containment of infectious diseases through international cooperation and assistance. To this end, we have been making sustained efforts for introduction of more sophisticated structure and mechanism in our public health system. Developing countries, particularly the LDCs, need special technical and financial support from the developed world in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

We understand that the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) are important tools to ensure transparency, and build trust and confidence among the State parties. We recognize the need for enhanced participation of State parties in the CBMs. To this end, we recommend the following initiatives:

- a) Designation of national focal points by all State parties who will be responsible for preparing and submission of CBMs.
- b) Introduction of a more user-friendly version of CBMs, possibly an electronic means of submission of CBMs
- c) Providing necessary expert and technical support to the countries facing difficulties in preparing and timely submission of CBMs.
- d) Regularly update the CBMs reporting format incorporating the issues meeting the challenges posed by the new developments in science and technology.

Mr. Chairman,

The ultimate goals of the CBMs should be to achieve a fully verifiable regime. After all, the real success of the convention will depend on the effectiveness of the verification regime.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude by reiterating Bangladesh's commitment to work with international community for ensuring full and effective implementation of the Convention. Our collective efforts may save millions of human lives, protect our environment and ensure a safer world for the generations to come.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.