

Statement
by the Head of the Delegation of Ukraine,
Mr. Olexandr Aleksandrovych,
at the 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, December 10-14, 2012

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all I would like to join previous speakers in extending my warmest congratulations to you upon your assumption of the Chairmanship of the 2012 Meeting of States Parties to the BTWC. In performing your important duties you may completely rely on full support and co-operation of the delegation of Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman,

As one of the co-authors of the BWC, Ukraine continuously stresses the important role of this indispensable instrument in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). We consider the Convention to be the proper multilateral forum for developing international cooperation in the field of bio-safety and bio-security, including scientific and technological cluster.

It is also important to assess the latest scientific and technological developments related to the Convention, to take joint efforts aimed at raising awareness among scientists concerning the BWC regime and possible risks that may emerge from the lack of knowledge.

Another priority of the international community ought to be effective response in case of alleged use of biological or toxin agents. Strengthening regional and international cooperation gains particular importance for the prevention of bio-threats as well as providing timely assistance to the affected countries.

The specific areas of interaction should encompass all aspects of protection against biological weapons beginning with the definition of future threats, problems of indication, timely notification, decontamination, development of efficient vaccines and other areas of work. International cooperation in the field of peaceful biological activities as well as extension of technical cooperation in biotechnological field remains a very important task.

Mr. Chairman,

From the very beginning BWC was mainly targeted at biological weapons. 40 years later we are facing other types of biothreats and biorisks. In particular those arising from the new emerging and re-emerging dangerous infectious diseases, drug-resistant diseases, threats arising from progress in modern life sciences, from unpredictable consequences of scientific inventions.

Therefore, we support the idea that education and awareness-raising are efficient tools for fighting misuse of developments in Biology. For that purpose, Ukraine joined the Working Paper submitted at the 7th Review Conference by Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and Switzerland (on behalf of the "JACKSNNZ"), as well as Kenya, Pakistan, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, titled: "Possible approaches to education and awareness-raising among life scientists".

Despite all the efforts, up to now there seems to be still very limited awareness of the BWC and biothreats arising from progress in Biology amongst life scientists and academic community. There is a need to foster the development and implementation of codes of conduct and educational processes that would be required to underpin the proper functioning of such codes and efficient international cooperation in the field.

In that framework, in April 2012 Ukraine hosted an important International Conference "Biosafety and Biosecurity-2: Implementing the Recommendations Relevant to the Biological Weapons Convention". The Conference was attended by over 160 participants – professionals in the field of life sciences, biotech and pharmaceutical industry, representatives from governments, universities national veterinary and healthcare services.

The outcome of the Conference was highlighted earlier this year during the BWC Experts Meeting. I am pleased to note that the Conference was highly praised by its participants, and Ukraine will follow up cooperation with all interested parties.

Mr. Chairman,

Last June Ukraine and Poland hosted the European football championship – Euro-2012. Luckily, we did not experience any instances of biothreats. However, the appropriate services in our country were prepared to respond effectively in case of possible outbreaks of infectious diseases or bioterrorists attacks. We are grateful for international assistance – in particular from the World Health Organization – in ensuring full preparedness to counter eventual biothreats. Euro-2012 was a good example of effective and successful cooperation in preventing challenges and threats to security in general and to biosecurity in particular.

As yet another example of our efforts at the national level I could also mention that this year the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the Concept of the State Program on Biosafety and Biosecurity, which meets the key objectives of the BWC.

The above-mentioned efforts and events corroborate Ukraine's reputation as a country that fully complies with its obligations under the Convention and submits its regular comprehensive reports on the BWC implementation within the framework of confidence-building measures.

Mr Chairman,

We believe it is necessary that the international community intensifies efforts and finds appropriate measures to promote universality of the Convention as one of the key prerequisites for its comprehensive implementation.

Ukraine supports the efforts undertaken for improving the format of the existing Confidence Building Measures, monitoring and analysis of the latest advances of biological sciences and technologies, further development of international cooperation and technical assistance in the context of the implementation of Article X.

Strengthening the BWC can also be achieved through the development of result-oriented programs in a number of areas, including science and technology, healthcare, agriculture.

Ukraine believes that it is possible to further strengthen international peace and security while not impeding comprehensive and effective development of national bio-industry, medicine and agriculture, as well as promoting the economic and scientific relations among the nations.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to assure you that this delegation and my government are ready to make a meaningful contribution to resolving "disputable issues" on this Meeting's agenda and improving the BWC regime in all its aspects as a fundamental pillar of the WMD non-proliferation regime.

Thank you.