



**CHAIR
NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT
GENEVA CHAPTER**



CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION (BWC)

**MEETING OF EXPERTS ON INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING
OF THE CONVENTION (MX5)**

Agenda Item 4: Consideration of the full range of approaches and options to further strengthen the Convention and its functioning through possible additional legal measures or other measures in the framework of the Convention

**Statement
delivered by Mr. Seymur Mardaliyev,
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan
to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**

Geneva, 8 September 2021

Madame Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons (NAM).
2. The Group congratulates you, Madame Chairperson, on your election as the Chair of this Meeting of Experts on Institutional Strengthening of the Convention. We are proud to see the representative of the Group of NAM and other States Parties presiding over this important meeting and confident that under your able stewardship the discussions will lead to a successful conclusion.
3. The Group re-emphasizes its position as reflected in the Final Outcome Document of the 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Baku in October 2019.
4. In the Final Outcome Document, NAM States Parties to the BTWC reaffirmed that the possibility of any use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins as weapons should be completely excluded and the conviction that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind and recognized the particular importance of strengthening the Convention through the resumption of the multilateral negotiations for a legally binding Protocol dealing with all Articles of the Convention, in a balanced and comprehensive manner, including through verification measures bearing in mind that the lack of such verification regime poses a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention and urged the party rejecting negotiations to reconsider its policy.

5. The Group highlights the importance to maintain close coordination among the NAM States Parties to the Convention and highlighted that the BTWC forms a whole and that, although it is possible to consider certain aspects separately, it is critical to deal with all of the issues interrelated to this Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner.
6. We also emphasize the importance of the BTWC in the international legal architecture related to WMD and in particular in the total prohibition of all biological and toxin weapons while further emphasizing the need for enhancing, without restrictions, international cooperation and assistance and exchanges in toxic biological agents equipment and technology for peaceful purposes without any discrimination, in conformity with the Convention. They reaffirmed that the respective mandates of this Convention and other international organizations should be respected, while utilizing the experiences of the relevant multilateral organizations dealing with human and animal health on issues that are of direct relevance to the Convention, and that no actions should be taken to undermine the convention and/or interfere with its mandate.
7. The Group reiterates its deep concern about the potential use and/or threat of use of biological agents and toxins as an instrument of war and terror. In this regard, the Group feels that there is a great necessity and urgency for the States Parties of the BTWC to work towards strengthening and improving the effectiveness and implementation of this Convention so that together we can fully address this concern.
8. We strongly believe that the universal adherence to and further strengthening of the Convention will make a significant contribution to advancing further in the field of disarmament on the basis of universal, multilateral, non-discriminatory and transparent negotiations with the goal of reaching general and complete disarmament under strict international control.
9. Pending a consensus on a comprehensive legally binding instrument on the balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention, the Group reaffirms that the Review Conference, as the forum to make substantive and procedural decisions, constitutes as the only authority for reviewing the operation of the Convention with a view to ensuring that the purposes of the preamble and provisions of the Convention are being realized.
10. 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.
11. Recent developments once again highlight the need to conclude a legally binding instrument to strengthen the Convention in all its aspects. In the past, useful work has been done in this regard under the BWC in the Ad hoc Group and NAM continues to attach high importance to preserving and eventually resuming that work.
12. NAM believes that the lack of a comprehensive Protocol to strengthen implementation of all aspects of the Convention has created a gap in the provision of prompt and effective assistance under Article VII to States Parties to the BWC. NAM further reaffirms that providing and/or supporting timely assistance in

accordance with Article VII is a legal obligation of States Parties. While noting that States Parties' national preparedness contributes to international capabilities for response, investigation and mitigation of outbreaks of disease, NAM reaffirms that this should not be imposed as a precondition for either provision or receipt of assistance. To this end, while welcoming the establishment of a database open to all States Parties to facilitate assistance under the framework of Article VII, a detailed procedure and mechanism for a timely, effective and adequate response needs to be developed.

13. The Group of States of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to the BWC maintains its conviction that the multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement is the only sustainable method of strengthening the Convention, it recognizes however the value of the inter-sessional ad hoc mechanism for promoting the objectives of the Convention.

I thank you.