

Iran's Intervention on agenda item 5 of BWC MX 4 (2020)

(A set of guidelines and formats to assist a State Party, if required, when submitting an application for assistance in the framework of Article VII)

Developing guidelines for a timely, effective and adequate response could contribute to better implementation of Article VII when needed.

However, developing such guidelines should be consistent with rights and obligations of States Parties under the Convention.

Article VII provides that any States Party has the right to request assistance when it believes it has been exposed to danger as a result of violation of the Convention. Article VII does not have an obligation for the requesting State to provide detailed information to the Security Council. So in developing guidelines for submission of a request of assistance to the Security Council this consideration should be taken into account.

What type of information should be included in a request of assistance. This issue needs in-depth deliberations. The Security Council has a responsibility to make a decision on a request for assistance. It is not supposed to coordinate assistance and response. So provision of detailed information to the Security Council may not be necessary, as proposed in some working papers. In order to make a decision on a request of assistance, the Security Council may need general information from the requesting State. Some of the information may be confidential and the requesting State may not wish to share such information at the time of the request.

What is missing now is an understanding on how the Security Council should act promptly and effectively when it receives a request of assistance from a State Party which is exposed to biological attack. Meeting of Experts need to discuss and consider this issue.

If the Security Council commits itself to a set of guidelines or steps for a prompt consideration and decision on a request for assistance, it gives confidence to States Parties that their possible request will receive serious consideration in the Council. Only then developing guidelines for submission of a request of assistance to the Security Council could be useful.