

Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Challenges and obstacles to international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology under Article

Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has submitted a concise WP, as BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.6 under the agenda item 6 and it will be put on the website of the meeting. I invite delegations to study it.

In our WP we have highlighted the significance of international cooperation in biological sciences and technology for the economic and technological development of all BWC States Parties as such cooperation contribute to building capacity for disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment and also to fulfilling national plans in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation.

We have shared our assessment of the state of International cooperation and assistance which in not satisfactory. The Covide-19 pandemic clearly showed the weakness in implementation of Article X and underlined the need to focus on strengthening international cooperation and assistance to ensure all States Parties, particularly developing States, have access to equipment, materials and scientific and technological information relevant to the Convention.

We believe the lack of an institutional mechanism in the context of the BWC is the main challenge to developing full, effective and non-discriminatory international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology. We fully support the proposals of the NAM for dealing with this challenge. NAM has proposed the establishment of an institutional mechanism through negotiation in an open-ended working group. NAM has also proposed that pending the establishment of such a mechanism, States Parties should develop an action plan for implementation of Article X. These proposals are on the table for the next RevCon and we hope they should form an integral part of a comprehensive and balanced approach to strengthening the convention.

Existence of restrictions, limitations, inconsistent with the Convention, as well as unilateral coercive measures including economic, trade and financial sanctions has created serious obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes. We have deep concern in this regard.

Such measures are in breach of the undertaking under Article X to implement the Convention in a manner not to hamper the economic and technological development of other States Parties. There exists so far no mechanism, guideline or procedure in the context of BWC to address the concern of States Parties that are affected by restrictions or denial policies and other unilateral coercive measures.

NAM has proposed the development of a multilaterally negotiated procedure within the BWC to settle disputes when a State Party is restricted and/or denied to access drugs, medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and related equipment and materials for peaceful purposes as result of unilateral coercive measures taken inconsistent with the Article X of the Convention by another State Party. We fully support this proposal and believe it is practical.

We propose that in the next RevCon States Parties should undertake not to impose, under any circumstances, restrictions, limitations and unilateral coercive measures on trade in such areas as drugs, medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, biological agents, equipment and materials for peaceful purposes in particular for treatment of patients. States Parties should also condemn the existing unilateral coercive measures, which impede the implementation of Article X, and urge the immediate lifting of all such measures to ensure full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X.

Addressing this issue has a high priority for my delegation. In our WP we have highlighted some general examples of the impact of the U.S. Unlawful Unilateral Coercive Measures on Iran's Health System.

These unlawful unilateral coercive measures imposed by the government of the United States of America against the Islamic Republic of Iran have impeded or disrupted access to and procurement of medicine and medical supplies, protective kits, development, purchase and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and reagents and raw materials for their production.

The biggest victims of the ruthless application of unlawful unilateral coercive measures by the U.S. are ordinary people and medically vulnerable groups in Iran. These illegitimate and inhumane measures undermine the ability of Iran's government to develop and maintain medical infrastructure, and usually lead to the shortage of medical equipment and medicine, rising prices, corruption and creation of black markets, resulting in impeding or complicating the ability of ordinary people to get access to free medical aid. Some of the negative effects of these unilateral sanctions such as disability and death cannot be reversed or compensated. These are only a few general examples of an enormous number of negative effects of the U.S. unilateral coercive measures on the health system of Iran and the right of Iranian people to health.

The BWC States Parties should urge the United States to immediately lift all its unilateral coercive measures against Iran and other targeted BWC States Parties. Such measures constitute violation of Article X of the Convention and right to health, and the U.S. should be called upon to comply with its obligations under the Convention and international law.