



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

STATEMENT DURING THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXINS WEAPONS CONVENTION (BWC) MEETINGS OF EXPERTS, 30TH TO 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2021, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

MX 1: Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X (30th -31st August, 2021)

Agenda Item 4: Consideration of the reports of the States Parties on their Full and Comprehensive implantation of all provisions of Article X.

Thank you, Mr. Chair for giving me the floor.

1. At the outset, the delegation of Kenya congratulates you, **Mr. Kimmo Laukkanen** on your appointment as the Chair of the Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a particular focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under article X. I assure you of my delegation's full support.
2. **Mr. Chair**, Kenya attaches great importance to this Meeting of Experts. The relevance of the BWC in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic has undoubtedly enhanced the impetus for greater Cooperation and Assistance under Article X. Like all countries across the globe, Kenya has also not been spared from the ravaging impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to COVID-19, Kenya continues to experience sporadic outbreaks of other infectious diseases such as cholera, typhoid among others. This coupled with the high burden of communicable diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS.
3. **Mr. Chair**, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic highlights the potential of highly infectious biological agents which can be weaponized. It has also reaffirmed the vital role of science, technology, and innovation, either in providing solutions to mitigate against pandemics, disasters or breeding

new threats such as outbreaks of infectious diseases, food sabotage and mass destruction of human, animals and plants lives.

4. **Mr. Chair**, the Covid-19 pandemic has instigated the need to transit to more sustainable, equitable and resilient societies. Therefore, science, technology, and innovation policies should be re-designed to guide innovation efforts to where they are most needed and to tackle the challenges that come with it. Hence the need for enhanced sustainability, inclusivity and resilience.
5. The on-going pandemic has further made a compelling case for increased collaboration and assistance among BWC States Parties, through capacity building, infrastructure support and provision of equipment. This not only vital for saving lives but also assist in managing the spread of the pandemic.
6. **Mr. Chair**, Kenya has been undertaking the following activities in the full implementation of Article X:
 - i. Strengthening biosafety laboratories in the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.
 - ii. Procurement of buffer stocks of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies.
 - iii. Capacity building of contact points from the relevant institutions to facilitate information sharing for confidence building measures.
 - iv. Continuous capacity building of medical personnel, researchers and students on biosafety and biosecurity.
7. **Mr. Chair**, Kenya expresses its appreciation for the Assistance and Cooperation with other States Parties and relevant international organizations, as witnessed in, *inter alia*, capacity building in support of BWC implementation; strengthening preparedness to prevent and respond to threats involving biological agents and in enabling tools for awareness raising as well as education and engagement.
8. Additionally, **Mr. Chair**, specific activities have included:
 - i. With support from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) organized an Online Training Workshop on the Preparation and Submission of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) under the BWC. Additionally, a training on CBMs for national stakeholders, in preparation of 2022 CBM submission was held.

- ii. Kenya has also recently participated in workshops organized for the Republics of the Sudan and Mali to share Kenya's national experience on BWC CBMs.
 - iii. Kenya also made a presentation on the role of a competent Authority as a focal point during the MX3 informal webinar held on 7th May, 2021.
 - iv. Training of National Biosafety Authority Board Members on Gene Editing Technology supported by BEP has also taken place
 - v. Provision of PPE, vaccine testing Kits as well as donation of vaccines to Kenya to address the Covid-19 pandemic continue to be received.
 - vi. Capacity building on Biological Threats targeting law enforcers, regulators, and responders by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre Upgrade and strengthening of the pathogen Asset Control System (PACS) and the Sample Management and Receiving Facility (SMRF)-KEMRI- DTRA- US.
9. In this regard, **Kenya**, reiterates the call in Article X for enhanced cooperation to the further development and application of scientific discoveries in the field of bacteriological (biology) for the prevention of disease, as well as for other peaceful purposes.
10. In conclusion. **Mr. Chair**, the Covid-19 pandemic serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of the full implementation of Article X of this important Convention.

I thank you for your attention.