

Statement by the United Arab Emirates

At the 2021 Meetings of Experts of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons

4th meeting, September 6-7, 2021

Research support degree of response and preparedness

Mr. President,

On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate. We also congratulate you on presiding over this meeting. On behalf of the United Arab Emirates, we express our appreciation for the efforts of all those in charge of these meetings and the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons. The United Arab Emirates is also grateful for the pioneering role played the United Nations in this regard.

At the outset, we would like to emphasize the UAE's continued support for international efforts to abide by and implement the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention, which has a prominent role in prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons, in addition to its clear role in obligating international parties to destroy those prohibited weapons.

What the world is going through today due to the impacts and implications of the Coronavirus spectre on all aspects of our social, economic, civil and political life, requires the shaping of agendas to ensure a safe, healthy and productive life, and a return to sustainable growth and development. The UAE efforts in this area reflect its ability to contain the disease and its impacts not only with regard to health, but also with regard to the State's management of the pandemic crisis and the level of awareness to understand, comprehend and adhere to the instructions, and take all precautions that limit the spread of the epidemic.

We affirm that the United Arab Emirates is making great efforts in confronting the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Since the beginning of the outbreak of the virus worldwide, the government of the United Arab Emirates, under its wise leadership, has been getting ready and prepared for this crisis. The national



cadres were ready before the crisis, thanks to the positivity that was implanted in the sons and daughters of the nation. The country became able to continue work and cross into the future and post-Coronavirus crisis with greater preparedness and high efficiency.

The UAE has also worked to limit the spread of this epidemic, by setting up a national risk register that included an assessment of biorisks, in addition to setting priorities for response to them, such as epidemics and diseases that may affect humans, animals as well as agricultural pests. This came with coordinated and supportive efforts with the UAE authorities concerned with combating epidemics. Response plans have also been developed to deal with biorisks. They include operational procedures that are periodically updated based on the changes taking place, whether changes related to the capabilities of first responders or improvements in practices to achieve an effective response, in addition to plans and training programs to raise the efficiency of responders to biological accidents and emergencies.

The United Arab Emirates has adopted a series of national policies, strategies and plans to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, including coordination efforts with land and sea ports in relation to addressing biological hazards. There is also the National Operations Center, which operates 24/7 and is concerned with coordinating national efforts and following up on any emergency, including emergencies related to biological security. There is a team specialized in national resources that contributes to harnessing the national capabilities to respond to biological emergencies. There is also the national early warning system, which is a system based on sending warning messages to a specific geographical area in the event of any risks that the population may be exposed to. Work and coordination are underway to develop plans and elaborate frameworks and standards for the protection of the environment and biodiversity, which contribute to strengthening the concepts of biological security. The UAE is also participating and working with the Regional Organization for The Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) to setting standards for marine pollution, which is aimed at protecting the biological security of the Arabian Gulf region.

The United Arab Emirates has also implemented many precautionary measures in workplaces, and adopted the remote work system by providing its employees with controls and standards to be applied by them to raise the quality of their work, while preserving the social security rights of workers, especially expatriate workers, and coordinating their situations to provide them with a margin of job



security, which in turn is the first step to ensure the loyalty of workers, their belonging to their institutions, and their dedication to work in all circumstances.

It is expected that these methods will continue even after the outbreak of the Corona pandemic. Without prejudice to the application of precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease, for example, in light of this crisis, the work in the administration was divided into morning and evening shifts to prevent mixing, taking into account sterilization between the two shifts, taking all precautionary measures and imposing legal penalties on those who violate this. Moreover, caution was taken with regard to arrest and search procedures, as auxiliary tools for prevention were provided, and judicial officers were directed to all necessary instructions and directives in order to preserve their physical safety and prevent the spread of disease.

Mr. President,

The UAE has now entered the post-Corona stage due to the preparedness of the business sectors to work remotely. The UAE is one of the few countries that has been able to overcome work problems that afflicted all institutions of the world, thanks to the early transition to the E-Government and then to the Smart Government undertaken by its wise leadership. This confirmed the country's preparedness for digital transformation, which began in the eighties, through the introduction in the workplace of modern devices. This guidance had impressive results in the rapid and standard transformation of remote work in most institutions in the country. In addition to the flexibility that characterizes the national laws and the capabilities available in the legislation to keep pace with the transformations imposed by the pandemic on the nature of businesses and the pattern of their performance, in light of the government's adoption of various forms of current and future working methods.

Thank you.