Chairperson

The delegation of Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement of the Non-aligned Movement delivered by the distinguished representative of Azerbaijan and wishes to add few remarks in our national capacity. My Delegation also congratulates you Excellency, as the Chairman of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, as well as the Preparatory Committee for the Ninth Review Conference. We are confident in his ability to constructively engage and guide the work of the session to a successful outcome.

Nigeria remains a strong supporter of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) with profound dedication to the principles of the Convention to ‘ban the development, stockpiling, acquisition, retention, and production of: biological agents and toxins of all types and quantities that have no justification for preventive, protective or other peaceful purposes. Our National Authority on Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions (NAC&BWC), as the focal government agency seized with the implementation of the Convention in Nigeria, has continued to stimulate advancements towards the domestication of the Convention in Nigeria. This is evident in its drafting of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Prohibition bill recently submitted to the National Assembly and currently undergoing legislative procedures, preparatory to Presidential assent.

In its favourable disposition to the implementation of the Convention, the Nigerian Government had also constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), consisting of over 40 Government agencies, the private sector, as well as the Civil Societies on Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. The IMC convenes on quarterly basis, for the sole purpose of rendering updates and developing strategies for the Convention’s successful implementation. In collaboration with the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and with assistance from other relevant bodies, the National Authority on Chemical Weapons constantly monitors the Nigerian atmosphere to forestall sudden outbreak of diseases as a result of bio-agent activities.

The importance Nigeria attaches to the implementation of the BWC cannot be overstated. Its focal agency, the NAC&BWC, in line with its mandate, is required to organize interactive programmes to facilitate information and idea sharing, including sensitization of relevant national stakeholders involved in the BWC implementation process at all levels. One of such programmes was held in 2019 to provide a platform to acquaint stakeholders from Northern Nigeria with BWC expectations and requirements.
Nigeria’s preparedness for unforeseen Chemical or Biological Weapons attack is also evident in collaborative efforts between the NAC&BWC and stakeholders led by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), to develop a National Chemical and Biological Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (NCBEPRP). The aim of the plan is to outline policies, concept of operations, direction as well as responsibilities of primary support agencies to ensure the execution of a coordinated plan of action in the event of any deliberate or accidental release of biological or catastrophic chemical agents which may negatively impact Nigeria. Furthermore, since its ratification of the convention in July, 1973, Nigeria has made identifiable efforts to ensure the submission of its Confidence Building Measures report (CBM) with the most recent submissions recorded in 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively.

Indeed, Nigeria; through the National Authority on Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions, registered interest to participate in the Biological Weapons Convention National Preparedness Programme under the European Union Council Decision 2019/97CFSP in the margins of the 2018 Meeting of States Parties. This request was approved by UNODA with support from the EU. The programme, launched virtually in October 2020, was followed by a training workshop on collation and submission of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) Report, while implementation is presently suspended due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Nigeria and the BWC-ISU are currently working on its reactivation and wishes to seize this opportunity to extend appreciation to the EU, the BWC-ISU and other partners involved in the implementation of this programme.

Permit me to inform that, in furtherance of its support for the BWC, Nigeria is in the process of introducing chemical and biological education into its National Education Curriculum. This is with a view to ensuring that students from secondary to tertiary level education are adequately sensitized on chemical and biological safety and security.

To this end, my delegation encourages States not yet parties to the Convention to accede as soon as possible in order to bring its universalization to fruition, while wishing States Parties a successful deliberation and fruitful outcome.

I thank you for listening.