STATEMENT BY TURKEY

MEETING OF STATES PARTIES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND THEIR DESTRUCTION

Geneva, 22-25 November 2021

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Mr. Chair,

-Turkey aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and in our national capacity, we would like to deliver the following statement.

-We would like to express our gratitude to you for guiding the efforts between States Parties despite the difficult conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and making this meeting possible.

-Turkey considers the BWC one of the key components of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime and the cornerstone of the efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from being used as arms.

-It has an essential role to play today and it will continue to do so in the future as well. It should be reviewed with current realities and challenges in mind. The pandemic has reminded us how important this instrument is and how vulnerable we are.

Mr. Chair,

-We believe that improved implementation of Article X would be essential in building confidence between the international society and developing the capacities to prevent and contain epidemics.

-The rapid development of life sciences and biotechnology, as well as their convergence with emerging technologies, such as additive manufacturing (3D printing), big data and brain-machine interface, artificial intelligence or robotics, bring many benefits to areas such as health, environment and agriculture, which in turn increases the chances of its possible misuse by ill-intended people or organizations, including terrorists.

-We agree that there is a need for a Biosafety Code of Conduct Guidelines for scientists to follow in their work. We welcome the initiative started in this direction.
-There is an urgency to create mechanisms within the Convention for reviewing advances in science and technology and improving biosecurity and bio preparedness so that all countries are equipped to prevent and respond to the possible use of biological weapons.

- The reports from the Meetings of Experts (MX) and the Chairs’ summaries provide valuable suggestions and ideas which might be used as building blocks in the preparations of the Ninth Review Conference.

- There has been no new participation in the Convention in the last two years. All possible efforts should be devoted to universalization. Turkey calls upon States not yet party to the BWC to join without further delay.

Mr. Chair,

- We share the expectations towards having a better exchange of CBMs in terms of quality and quantity. We welcomed the record number submission of CBMs reports by State Parties. We hope that this trend will continue to increase. Turkey submits CBM reports regularly.

- We support efforts to establish more robust structures that would enable better functioning of the Convention, including taking decisions between Review Conferences.

- Turkey believes that a verification regime like the one in Chemical Weapons Convention might strengthen the efficacy of the Convention. Cognizant of the differences in opinions on the matter, States Parties should keep taking up this matter.

Mr. Chair,

- The Ninth Review Conference could be a significant milestone in the development of the Convention for future challenges and therefore needs adequate preparation.

- We continue to encourage all States Parties to keep and strengthen the ISU.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.