



PHILIPPINES

(As delivered)

**Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee to
the Ninth Review Conference of the
Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)
4 April 2022**

Agenda Item 5: General Exchange of Views

*Delivered by H.E. Maria Teresa T. Almojuela,
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippines
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva*

Mister Vice-Chair,

I thank you and your fellow Vice-Chair for the excellent stewardship of our work, and recognize the usefulness of documents prepared by the ISU.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Cambodia on behalf of ASEAN and to be delivered by the Ambassador of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Group of NAM States.

The instability of the situation in Europe and global challenges arising from Covid19 pandemic cast a long shadow on our preparations for a pivotal Review Conference. Throughout the history of the BWC, our predecessors have had to persevere under complex geopolitical landscapes to succeed, albeit in varying degrees, to step forward to implement the Convention. We count on the goodwill of States Parties: that current difficulties do not burden our collective clear-headedness and level of ambition for the Conference.

We must remember that the BWC was borne out of historically-trying times, and all States Parties bear the duty of stewarding this Convention amidst challenges of the day.

We should seek to harness current issues to drive momentum towards sharpening longstanding efforts to make the Convention more effective and credible. Recent

concerns on BWC's mechanisms should serve as a catalyst for the RevCon to discuss such concerns.

The Philippines will support all efforts to drive convergences towards substantive, balanced and comprehensive understandings and agreements to place the Convention on a firmer footing, 50 years after its adoption.

There is much ballast to support our work. The ISP agreed in 2017 facilitated robust and in-depth discussions that provide granular grounding for our considerations and possible agreements. The experts have delivered, and the RevCon must be able to transform ideas into action. Outside Geneva, the aims of the BWC have flourished on the labors of states, regional organisations, the academia, industry and professional societies. The Covid19 pandemic has re-set the course, scale and contours of international cooperation and institutional resilience across international bodies that parallel BWC's aims.

The RevCon can only affirm the Convention's credibility and relevance amidst these developments. It must decide to lend the Convention institutional vigour and groundedness to answer to long-standing and current demands on it. It must endeavor to chart a concrete, time-bound pathway to establish such institutional soundness, in order to implement the BWC provisions in a balanced and comprehensive manner. The absence of a verification mechanism, well-developed structures for implementing Articles VII and X, and a scientific review and advisory process, as well as processes for Articles V and VI, remain at the heart of our work, and should not be sidestepped in favor of more politically-convenient but less salient outcomes.

Mister Vice Chair,

The RevCon provides States Parties the opportunity to better situate our work in the wider context. We must keep pace of broad trends related to advances in the life-sciences and the governance of life sciences. We must further stimulate the nodes and nexus of the vibrant ecosystem of the BWC community.

While the RevCon is a states-led process, the Philippines will support any initiative to organize parallel events at the 9th RevCon to allow for dialogue with industry and scientific community. Article XII particularly mentions that the "review should take into account any new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention."

We must recognize its linkages with broader international efforts to achieve the SDGs, as pointed out in U.N. Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament in 2018.

The Philippines recalls that regional meetings have helped prepare a solid groundwork that allowed the past two Review Conferences to be better informed by realities and challenges across different regions. These have strengthened the ownership of States

Parties and stakeholders of the processes in Geneva. We hope that even if circumstances did not allow for such meetings to happen, there will be strong representations from regions in the RevCon.

Finally, in the absence of the President-designate at this late hour, my delegation has supported reasonable suggestions to move the dates of the Review Conference in order to allow the President-designate the time needed to undertake substantive preparations.

The Philippines would like to share its views on this and specific provisions of the Convention, including with a Working Paper on Article X to be presented with Finland, Georgia and Norway, in the course of our meeting.

I thank you, Vice Chair.