



STATEMENT BY

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GENEVA

AT THE

MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE BIOLOGICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION

GENEVA, 10 – 14 DECEMBER 2007.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on your well-deserved election as Chair of the 2007 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. Considering the effective manner you steered the Sixth Review Conference, including the Meeting of Experts in August this year, I am confident that this meeting will also prosper under your dynamic leadership. I therefore seize this opportunity to reassure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation, and to wish you every success in the tasks ahead.

2. Please allow us to align my delegation with the NAM Statement, as delivered by Cuba yesterday. I would also like to join other speakers who have taken the floor before me to underscore the importance of this meeting, whose main focus is on ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation and coordination, and regional and sub-regional cooperation on BWC implementation. These topics are critical to the effective implementation of the Convention.

3. Nigeria remains consistent and untiring in her efforts to ensure the full realisation of the objectives of the BWC, including the need to discourage the use of biological weapons in whatever form or circumstance. Whereas national action in preventive measures is indispensable, this alone may not be sufficient in addressing the complex challenges of bio-safety and dual use of bio-technology. This is why the capacity of Member States lacking capacity in critical areas must be strengthened by those with the means to do so, so that those States may be able to take such measures, as are necessary, to check, control, and neutralise actual or potential threats from the development, transfer, proliferation or use of biological and toxic weapons.

4. While Nigeria already has in place a National Authority for the implementation of the BWC, it is still in the process of incorporating the Convention into national law. We are, however, happy to inform that efforts to accelerate work on a Draft Legislation has been boosted by support from the European

Union, which has offered, as it has done in the past, to provide technical assistance by means of a workshop to review and tighten all the nuts and bolts in the Draft Legislation. Our work plan with the European Union is to get a robust Draft Legislation ready by the first quarter of 2008. Nigeria is also talking with some States Parties that have indicated their intent to support our capacity-building programmes. While I seize this opportunity to applaud the European Union for its continuing support, I must say that Nigeria looks forward to a successful outcome of on-going engagements with our partners as we seek to build up our capacity in critical areas.

5. Nigeria has successfully identified and streamlined the activities of all agencies and stakeholders that perform tasks covered by the Convention. The activities of these agencies are being effectively coordinated by a national focal point designed as the National Authority on Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. To underscore the importance, this national focal point is located within the Presidency of the Government of Nigeria, giving it unparalleled access to and visibility within the top hierarchy of the Government.

6. As we strive to promote the effective implementation of the BWC, we should also bear in mind that the threat posed by the proliferation and ready availability of small arms and light weapons to human life, peace and security in Africa, is far more serious and ever present than any posed by biological and toxic weapons. As we seek to strengthen the BWC and other international instruments for the promotion of global peace and security, we would therefore, do well to give thoughts to the harm and suffering being inflicted in much of Africa by the ready availability of small arms and light weapons.

7. My delegation looks forward to a positive outcome to the meeting, and stand ready to support all processes and initiatives aimed at strengthening the implementation of the BWC.

8. Thank you.