

Statement by Mr. Bedi Anmol Sher, Senior Adviser at the BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (BWC)– 9th REVIEW CONFERENCE on ARTICLE XII, 2nd December 2022, GENEVA

Madam. Chair,

First of all, let me thank you for giving us the floor. We compliment you for carrying out your work professionally, and quite efficiently.

India appreciates the useful work carried out during the inter-sessional process relating to the review of developments in the field of science and technology of relevance to BWC.

Rapid advances in life sciences including convergence with other fields, such as artificial intelligence, additive manufacturing, and robotics have paved way for applications of biological technologies that are easier, cheaper, faster, and more accessible. These developments offer unprecedented opportunities, including ways of furthering the Convention's aims, but can also increase proliferation and security risks.

The Article XII of the Convention itself provides for a review of new scientific and technological developments. However, we still do not have a scientific review mechanism in place.

In this regard, it is a matter of satisfaction to note the recent intensification of efforts to establish such a mechanism. We have heard useful proposals from various countries regarding a possible structure for the proposed scientific review mechanism.

For India, the scientific review mechanism is a pre-requisite for the strengthening the convention and its long term viability. We also look at such a mechanism from the perspective of international cooperation & assistance, and believe that it holds great value for developing countries.

We believe that the scientific review mechanism must be a technical body open to all states parties. It is also essential to maintain the independence of the advisory process to preserve its credibility and long term value. The mechanism must be provided with adequate financial and personnel resources. We note the merits of creation of new position of S&T officer in the ISU, taking into account the need for balanced strengthening of all articles of the convention.

Madam Chair

India supports the establishment of such a mechanism through an appropriate language in the outcome document of the 9th Review Conference.

That said, the language must appropriately reflect the mandate of the S&T review mechanism, and how it would differ from advisory process in other organisations focussing on biosecurity and biosafety. The proposed language must seek to encourage cross linkages with S&T advisory mechanisms in other relevant organisations in order to synergise complementarities and avoid overlaps.

I thank you, Madam. Chairperson.