

**2009 Meeting
Geneva, 7-11 December 2009**

**Meeting of Experts
Geneva, 24-28 August 2009**

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of, with a view to enhancing international
cooperation, assistance and exchange in biological
sciences and technology for peaceful purposes, promoting
capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance,
detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases**

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AND DISEASE MONITORING IN IRAQ

Submitted by Iraq

1. Iraq understands the importance of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime for the realization of international peace and security and the achievement of development and is therefore striving to be an element and a source of stability in the Middle East region and the entire world by overcoming the legacy and effects of previous policies and reassuming its constructive and natural role in the international community.
2. Article 9, paragraph (e), of the Permanent Constitution of the Republic of Iraq stipulates: "The Iraqi Government shall honour and meet Iraq's international obligations with regard to the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production and non-use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and associated equipment, material and technologies for use in the development, manufacture, production and use of such weapons, as well as delivery systems." Iraq welcomed the adoption by consensus of Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1762 (2007), which it views as an effective tool for the reinforcement of international measures aimed at providing an early and collective response to the challenge of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, in particular that of preventing them from falling into the hands of non-State actors - a matter of grave concern for the international community because of the implications for international security and peace. With a view to fulfilling the requirements specified in the two above-mentioned resolutions, the Iraqi Government has taken a series of related practical steps, including by submitting national reports on the introduction of national arrangements and measures for the implementation of these resolutions.

3. Iraq reiterates its full commitment to complying with all parts of the Biological Weapons Convention and to meeting the requirements set forth therein through the establishment of a national focal point, namely, the National Monitoring Directorate, to oversee the fulfilment of these provisions and requirements. The National Monitoring Directorate devises and submits annual confidence-building measures to the Implementation Support Unit in the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, further to the requirements of the 2006 Sixth Review Conference. Here, Iraq should like to emphasize the importance of the role which the Implementation Support Unit plays in furthering the implementation and universal adoption of the Convention.

4. The National Monitoring Directorate drafts legislation on non-proliferation in the Republic of Iraq with the aim of establishing and maintaining a unified national system that will enable Iraq to meet its obligations under treaties and conventions on the non-proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, including material, equipment and technologies, and of applying the system to all peaceful activities relating inter alia to the production, possession, use, stockpiling, import, export, transportation, transfer and management thereof, so as to ensure that such activities do not become prohibited activities and that there is no impediment to their use for peaceful purposes.

5. This legislation deals with prohibited and non-prohibited activities, prescribes penalties and establishes mechanisms for submitting declarations, issuing permits and monitoring the movement of dual-use material and equipment. In addition, it contains directives on biosecurity and biosafety at sites and in laboratories which handle micro-organisms and biological materials. The directives are designed to prevent unauthorized access to these materials, or their loss, theft or use for prohibited purposes.

6. Iraq attaches great importance to disease monitoring and detection and stresses the need for all States to introduce comprehensive and practical national measures to contain the spread of diseases in humans, animals and plants and to combat and treat such diseases promptly.

7. The purpose of monitoring and detecting infectious diseases is to identify outbreaks or to observe a disease with a view to its treatment and prevention in humans, animals and plants. Monitoring involves an extensive and systematic process of gathering information on combating and preventing disease. Therefore, a database is of vital importance in identifying outbreaks of any new diseases or the recurrence of any endemic or non-endemic diseases, together with any other diseases that have the potential to trigger an epidemic.

8. Monitoring plays a very important role in the planning, identification and formulation of strategies to control infectious diseases. Strong investigative and detection capacities, including good laboratory resources, modern and appropriate technologies and skilled personnel, are necessary in order to secure swift and decisive results.

9. The introduction of adequate biosafety and biosecurity measures in laboratories and facilities which handle pathogens and toxins and the adoption of the relevant standards of international organizations will prevent these sources from being stolen or lost or from escaping or being used in various ways to harm public health. The adoption of these and other measures

will reduce to some extent the incidence and facilitate the monitoring and detection of infectious diseases.

10. These measures therefore constitute a very important means of implementing the Biological Weapons Convention, and States parties should establish and apply biosafety and biosecurity measures that meet international standards and take account of their national circumstances and legal and constitutional procedures.
