

**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**

ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STRENGTHENING DISEASE MONITORING CAPACITIES IN IRAQ

Submitted by Iraq

1. Iraq stresses the importance of implementing article X of the Biological Weapons Convention, concerning international cooperation and assistance in the transfer of biological information and technologies and exchanges between the States parties to the Convention, particularly in relation to disease detection, investigation and diagnosis, and this for the purpose of strengthening the Convention and the capacities of the States parties thereto. In this connection, Iraq hopes to receive assistance in order to establish an early warning system for the detection of diseases and epidemics and to build its capacities in this area through exchanges of disease diagnosis and detection expertise and technologies that will contribute to the creation of an effective and proper system for capacity-building in this domain.
2. The Public Health Department of the Iraqi Ministry of Health is responsible for disease monitoring and diagnosis and for the formulation of disease control plans through a specialized scientific centre known as the Communicable Diseases Control Centre and its branches in the different Iraqi governorates and ports. The Centre develops programmes and measures to deal with all cases of infectious and epidemic disease, establishing scientific teams which it tasks with logging and diagnosing such cases, in conjunction with other health institutions. The Centre has good laboratories and staff who are highly experienced in diagnosing, detecting and monitoring epidemic diseases.

3. The Centre creates an emergency plan for each epidemic, before it occurs, in order to strengthen capacities and the resources needed to respond to and control epidemics. The Centre has a good ongoing relationship with the World Health Organization. Responsibility for laboratory testing and for detecting diseases and identifying their causes lies with the Central Health Laboratory, which performs the full range of laboratory tests on all cases of disease throughout Iraq. The laboratory has all the expertise and equipment that it needs to make it a reference laboratory. The laboratory has strong links with the World Health Organization in many spheres, including in regard to exchanges of information, technologies and expertise.
 4. Animal diseases are dealt with by the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, through the Public Veterinary Company, which specializes in protecting livestock from the threat of endemic and non-endemic diseases and in protecting human health by combating common diseases.
 5. The Company draws up and implements prevention and treatment plans and programmes to protect livestock from disease. It diagnoses animal diseases in the clinic and the laboratory and draws up plans for animal disease management, detection and treatment. The Company oversees animal health in livestock enterprises, monitors the production and marketing of veterinary vaccines and enforces border quarantine procedures as a means of protecting livestock.
 6. Since the early detection of infectious diseases is vitally important in reducing the spread and containing the geographical reach of epidemics, concerted efforts must be focused on the early detection, diagnosis, identification and eradication of diseases, together with relevant training provision and resource allocation.
 7. States parties which have advanced and modern monitoring systems and measures in place and the international institutions and organizations concerned must assist other States in this domain, including through: training courses to build the capacities of public health personnel; support for the use of information techniques and technology to collect and analyse data on infectious and epidemic diseases; strengthening of national and local disease monitoring programmes; and the improvement of early warning, monitoring, protection and response capacities.
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