

**Eighth Review Conference of the States Parties
to the Convention on the Prohibition of the
Development, Production and Stockpiling
of Bacteriological (Biological) and
Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**

21 October 2016

English only

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Item 11 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of issues identified in the review
of the operation of the Convention as provided
for in its article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action**

The BTWC Review Process of Science and Technology

Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. Article XII of the Convention states that a Conference of States Parties to the Convention shall be held "to review the operation of the Convention", "with a view to assuring that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the Convention" are being realized, and that "such review shall take into account any new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention".
2. Obviously, in light of the rapid developments in the life sciences, gaps among the States Parties are increasing in the fields of biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology and other related areas. Therefore, the discussions under this Article have the potential to enhance scientific dialogue and knowledge-sharing among States Parties, and create an opportunity to narrow the gaps persisting between the capabilities of developing and developed countries through enhanced cooperation and sharing of the related know-how and technologies.
3. As health related events with international concern are common threats and know no boundaries, the related science and technology should also be shared amongst the States Parties; And, in this vein, exchanges in information, education and training are of fundamental importance for the development of human resources and reducing inequalities between developed and developing States Parties in life sciences and the related technologies; therefore, capacity building, knowledge-sharing and transfer of technology in the areas of preparedness, surveillance, prevention, protection, detection, diagnosis, containment, mitigation, response, treatment and recovery related to the BTWC are common responsibilities of all States. Needless to say that, the developed States Parties bear a special responsibility in the framework of the Convention in this regard.
4. Measures taken by the States Parties in light of the new developments in the related science and technology should be in full conformity with their obligations under the Convention and create an environment conducive to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention. Likewise, such measures should in no way adversely affect the rights and obligations of the States Parties under the Convention.

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5. The BTWC provisions, in no way, recognize the distinction between haves and have-nots in the field of bio-science and bio-technology; therefore, the "non-proliferation concern" has no sensible meaning in relations with the cooperation among the States Parties, but in relations with the illegal non-state actors. The BTWC should not be misused to impose restrictions and/or limitations on transfers of biological agents, toxins, scientific knowledge, technology, equipment and materials for peaceful purposes within the States Parties. In this sense, having plans for active review of the developments in the related science and technology should contribute to the fullest exchange of knowledge and technology between developed and developing countries and ensure the unhindered and non-discriminatory flow of science and technology.

6. Taking lessons learned from other relevant international bodies, consideration of such developments requires a dedicated Session of Governmental Experts, open to all States Parties. The agenda and program of work of this session should be agreed by the States Parties at the Eighth Review Conference, which, consistent with Article X, should not be misused to impose restrictions and/or limitations on transfers of biological agents, toxins, scientific knowledge, technology, equipment and materials for peaceful purposes within the States Parties, and should contribute to the fullest exchange of knowledge and technology between developed and developing States Parties and ensure the unhindered and non-discriminatory flow of science and technology.

7. While the discussions in such sessions may be formulated in a more regular and structured manner, however, they should be States Parties driven. In order to achieve the utmost advantage out of the process, there should be a linkage between the technical issues and policy considerations; therefore, each delegation might be composed of both technical and political experts.

8. Factual reports of this process, dedicated each year on certain focused areas decided in advance by the States Parties based on their needs, should feed into the annual meeting of States Parties. This might then be formulated into policy recommendations by the States Parties and submitted to the next Review Conference for its consideration.
