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CHINA

WORKING PAPER

Position of principle of the Chinese delegation  
on the Biological Weapons Convention and its  
third review conference

1. China pursues an independent foreign policy of peace and is dedicated to the maintenance of lasting world peace and security. Always standing for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, China attaches great importance to and comprehensively abides by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (hereinafter referred to as the Convention), and is in favour of further strengthening its universality, authority and effectiveness.
2. For 20 years since it entered into force, the Convention has played a prominent role in banning biological and toxin weapons worldwide, and will continue to have a positive impact on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all weapons of mass destruction.
3. As a non-biological-weapon State that has once suffered from the scourge of bacteriological weapons, China has always advocated the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of biological weapons and pursues a policy of not developing, producing or stockpiling this type of weapon. China strictly abides by all the provisions of the Convention, and has conscientiously and comprehensively fulfilled all the obligations it has undertaken pursuant to the Convention. It has also submitted to the United Nations reports on information related to the Convention. For the purpose of promoting its social and economic development, China attaches great importance to the peaceful uses of biotechnology, and has actively supported and participated in international cooperation and exchanges in this field. China has made its contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of the effectiveness of the Convention.

4. China is of the view that appropriate measures must be taken to further enhance the authority and effectiveness of the Convention. To this end, efforts must be made to ensure that all States parties seriously and comprehensively discharge all their obligations under the Convention. In this respect, the developed countries which possess advanced biotechnology bear special responsibilities. Efforts must also be made to attract and encourage more countries to join the Convention, so as to increase its universality.

5. It is China's consistent position that efforts must be made to further expand international cooperation and exchanges in the peaceful uses of biotechnology, which is not only of benefit to the social and economic development of all countries, but is also of great significance to enhancing the universality and authority of the Convention. It is important that all States parties seriously fulfil their obligations in this respect, and implement the Convention in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

6. China is strongly against the proliferation of biological weapons, but at the same time, it is also opposed to any form of hindrance or restriction on international cooperation and exchanges in the peaceful uses of biotechnology. China supports the reasonable demand of the vast number of developing countries that the developed countries which possess advanced biotechnology take positive steps to promote trade in and the transfer of biotechnology for peaceful purposes, and to enhance international cooperation in this area.

7. China believes that universal adherence to the Convention and effective implementation of it will have a stimulating effect on the negotiations on the chemical weapons convention. By the same token, the early conclusion of the convention on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons will also have a favourable impact on the strengthening of the biological weapons convention. Actively participating in the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament, China has made its contribution to the effort to reach the early conclusion of the convention that provides for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons.

8. China holds that in order to further strengthen the Convention, measures to build confidence can be appropriately reinforced. The existing confidence-building measures (CBMs) have played a useful role in the implementation of the Convention, and should be further promoted. Ways to

improve and strengthen CBMs can be explored on the basis of extensive and full consultations. Efforts in this direction should be guided by the "reasonable, appropriate, realistic and feasible" principle, and care should be taken to avoid any harm to the legitimate rights and interests of the States parties. On the basis of this position, China proposes the following:

(a) All States parties should be encouraged to participate in the exchange of information related to the Convention;

(b) Efforts should be made to appropriately improve the content and format of the exchange of information, which may include, among other things, legislation, regulations or other measures enacted or adopted by States parties for the implementation of the Convention, and reports on outbreaks of infectious diseases and similar occurrences caused by toxins;

(c) In the interval between this review conference and the next, States parties may put forward new proposals for the further improvement of the exchange of information and have them communicated to other States parties by the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs.

9. The issue of verification of the Convention needs to be prudently studied and resolved. In view of the complexity of this issue, more time and further steps are required. States parties may, in an appropriate form and under the guidance of the principles on verification adopted by the UNDC and endorsed by resolution 43/78A of the United Nations General Assembly, conduct in-depth studies on the feasibility of verification of the Convention.

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