



**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations
Geneva**

**Statement by Pakistan at
the Fourth Session of the Working Group on Strengthening of the
Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)
“Assistance, Response and Preparedness”
19 August 2024**

Mr Chair,

The issue of implementing Article VII of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has rightly garnered increasing attention among States Parties. Since its inclusion in the intersessional programme in 2003, there has been a growing recognition of the need to strengthen the mechanisms for timely and effective assistance in cases where a State Party has been exposed to danger due to a violation of the Convention.

In our consultations on Article VII over the past several years, the States Parties have acknowledged the absence of effective institutional and operational structures to ensure the effective implementation of Article VII of the Convention and there is collective appetite to redress this situation.

Our Working Group can help establish such specific mechanisms through concrete and practical measures.

There are useful proposals on the table, warranting our thorough consideration, including the establishment of mobile bio-medical units (Russia’s proposal), a database for assistance (proposal of France and India), and the development of voluntary guidelines and to assist States Parties in submitting applications for assistance under Article VII (proposal of South Africa).

Additionally, there is a need to explore further synergies between Article VII and Article X to ensure a comprehensive approach to assistance and preparedness.

As also noted in the US Working Paper, there could be multiple pathways for provision of assistance on increasing preparedness and for response to an event.

We believe that provision of timely and effective assistance to an affected State Party should not be contingent upon any action or finding by the UN Security Council regarding the investigation of alleged use. Assistance must be provided promptly based on the request of the affected State.

This was also recognized by the 8th Review Conference, when it noted that “in view of the humanitarian imperative, the Conference encourages States Parties in a position to do so to provide timely emergency assistance, if requested pending consideration of a decision by the Security Council”.

Mr Chair,

Considering that in any event, it would be challenging to immediately determine, whether it is a naturally occurring or a deliberately induced disease, and the fact that strengthening capacities relating to preparedness including surveillance and detection in one area would contribute to the other, it is of paramount importance to coordinate closely with organizations such as World Health Organization (WHO) and World Organization of Animal Health (WOAH), as we discuss setting up mechanisms for implementation of Article VII.

In conclusion, Pakistan remains committed to working with all States Parties to strengthen the implementation of Article VII and to develop practical mechanisms that will ensure timely and effective assistance in the event of a biological threat. We believe that our collective efforts will contribute to a safer and more secure world.

I thank you
