



Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
Meeting of Experts
Geneva, 7 – 8 August 2018

MX 1 – International Cooperation and Assistance

Statement by Mr Alessandro Mandanici
Deputy-Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament

Agenda item 4

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Madam Chair,

Italy places utmost importance to international assistance and cooperation under art. X of the BWC, both as a means to enhance national capacities for the use of bacteriological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes and as a way to mitigate global biological threats.

Many of the cooperation projects relevant to the Convention in which Italy is currently involved are outlined in detail in Working Paper 17 submitted in 2017 by a number of States participating in the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

These, in which Italy and its institutions and research centres are involved through funding or direct implementation, include the Pan-African Network for Rapid Research, Response, Relief and Preparedness for Infectious Diseases Epidemics, aiming to strengthen regional and pan-African capacities to enable rapid and effective response to emerging and re-emerging infectious disease threats; setting up Laboratory Information Management Systems in selected African countries to improve the ability of laboratories to rapidly report results, in order to strengthen diagnostic capacity and therefore minimize the risk of potential pandemic threats; improving epidemiological and serological tools for the diagnosis and control of Brucellosis in the Mediterranean region; and extending to the whole Iraqi Kurdistan Region the health information system set up in a recently concluded pilot project. The information system will be able to collect, analyze, disseminate and utilize data regarding disease occurrence, vaccinations, child-births and deaths.

Further activities, some of them recently concluded, relate to the enhancement of CBRN capacities in various regions and States, including South East Asia, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon, and Mediterranean and Black Sea non-EU countries. These projects have been co-implemented by Italy, and were funded through the EU instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

In this context, I would like to remind that under its 2017 Presidency of the Global Partnership, Italy attached particular priority to countries' preparedness against epidemic outbreaks, with a special focus on Africa. In conjunction with the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence Initiative, the Italian Presidency of the Global Partnership has organized a Regional Conference in Africa to discuss countries' biosafety and biosecurity priorities in the context of the post-Ebola crisis. The Conference was held in Rabat, Morocco, on 25-26 October 2017. As outlined in the related working paper presented by the EU, comprehensive discussions took place during the Conference, resulting in a consensus agreement among the eleven participating African countries on a detailed set of priorities for future capacity building initiatives, particularly on a regional scale.

Thank you, Madam Chair