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AT THE MEETING 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 (BWC)

GENERAL STATEMENT, GENEVA, 1 DECEMBER 2014

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Colleagues,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Schmid on your assumption of the Chair to the 2014 Meeting of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). I am confident that you will guide the work of this meeting to a successful conclusion, and assure you of my Delegation's full support and cooperation.

The Meeting of Experts in August was meaningful and interactive with a lot of input from various experts. Based on the common understanding reached during the early part of the current intersessional process, Japan hopes that this Meeting of States Parties (MSP) enables us to compile our views on several issues, and build a common understanding and promote effective action towards the next review conference in 2016. In this regard, Japan highly appreciates your initiative to provide us, prior to the meeting, with the Chairman's draft elements for inclusion in the Report of the Meeting of States Parties.

Japan fully associates with the JACKSNNZ statement delivered by the distinguished delegate from Canada. Nevertheless, I would like to draw attention to a few points of particular interest for Japan.

First, we firmly recognise the necessity to review scientific and technological development in life science and to take appropriate measures against biological threats. Although rapid advancement in the field of life science has benefited mankind, it also increases potential biological threats caused by their misuse or illicit use. In this regard, States Parties should fully implement the Convention by introducing or reinforcing legislative and administrative measures to withstand the rapid advances in life sciences. We also see the value of the development and establishment of an effective framework to review the advances in science and technology and their implications for the BWC. Japan, along with interested states parties, would like to actively engage in a discussion to develop a systematic review structure for the forthcoming Review Conference.

Second, Japan has continued to provide cooperation and assistance related to the BWC bilaterally and with international organizations, academia, and research institutions. For instance, through bilateral channels, Japan has contributed to capacity building, such as detection and diagnosis of infectious diseases, and vaccine development and production. In particular, we have focused on Asian and African countries by providing technical assistance, including inviting trainees to Japan. Furthermore, we provided a total of 1.3 million USD in fiscal 2014 for the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for fighting against infectious diseases mainly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Third, Japan attaches great importance to strengthening national implementation in order to further reinforce the BWC. In order to keep pace with and address rapid development in life sciences, Japan reviewed a wide array of domestic biosecurity measures and shared with the States Parties to the Convention the actions we have taken at the Meeting of Experts in August. Furthermore, we also introduced our experience that periodic compilation work for submission of confidence building measure (CBM) forms could provide each internal ministries and agencies with valuable opportunities to review their current national status of BWC implementation and to also consider further possible measures and improvements. We hope that our experience and efforts would serve as a potential model for states parties interested to enhance their national implementation.

Lastly, Japan welcomes the current discussion under the biennial agenda item on strengthening assistance and cooperation relevant to Article VII. We value the consideration and development of detailed procedures and mechanisms for requesting assistance under Article VII, which contributes to enhancing implementation of assistance for protection and builds capacity for an effective response. Japan wishes a constructive discussion on this agenda item during this Meeting of States Parties.

Mr. Chairman,

We all share a goal to further reinforce the Convention. In light of being in the direction of moving towards a greater focus on effective action based on a broad range of common understandings which were reached in the past meetings, we need to collectively take forward a concrete outcome of this meeting with a clear vision of a post 8th Review Conference. In this regard, it would be necessary for us to work on in a practical and pragmatic manner, rather than the legally binding approach, by focusing on how to make existing initiatives and proposals into effective action.

I thank you, Mr. Chair