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

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Consideration of ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions

NATIONAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON HANDLING AND APPLICATION OF BIOLOGICAL AGENTS AND TOXINS

Submitted by Iran (Islamic Republic of)

1. Following the signature of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) by the government of Iran in 1972 and its subsequent ratification by the parliament in 1973, the Convention was integrated into the country's legal system. Therefore violation of the provisions of the Convention is considered illegal and would be accordingly prosecuted and punishable as a criminal offence under the laws currently in force in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

2. In the framework of the principles and purposes of the Convention, following laws and regulations which are subject to periodic update, taking into account the progressive nature of the developments in the field of science and technology and according to the country's needs, are in effect:

(i) Environment protection and improvement Act of 1974 and its subsequent amendment in 1992,

(ii) Importation and exportation of noxious and poisonous substances through customs Act of 1988,

(iii) Soil laboratories Act of 1992,

(iv) Government Directive against water contamination of 1994,

(v) Government Directive for safe animal husbandry and animal products of 1994,

(vi) Prevention of air pollution Act of 1995,

(vii) Amendment to the section 2 Article 1 of the ministry of health and medical education's establishment and responsibilities Act" of 1996,

(viii) Islamic penal code of 1996 (Articles 688-9, 686, 679-80, 675)

(ix) Regulations on transportation of dangerous substances including chemical, biological, nuclear items and equipments or devices dangerous to the safety of the humans and animals of 2002,

(x) Government's Directive on production, ownership, acquirement, theft, acquirement by deceit, unlawful transportation, movement, storage and distribution of nuclear, chemical and biological substances of 2003.

(xi) Directives and administrative procedures for transportation of dangerous substances Act of 2005.

3. Nevertheless considering the fact that biological agents and toxins have their long list and record of application in diagnostic, medical and laboratory areas of medicine, following regulations to protect general humans, animals and plants health, environment and people working directly or indirectly with these agents have been in place since 1941 in the country.

(i) Prevention of Communicable and sexually transmitted Diseases Act of 1941,

(ii) Medical Affairs and Medicines Act of 1955,

(iii) Food, Drink, Hygienic and Cosmetic Substances Act of 1967,

(iv) Plant Protection Act of 1967, and subsequent government directives of 1968,

(v) Iran Veterinary Organization Act of 1971.

4. Furthermore, appropriate guidelines for monitoring and conducting research activities on new substances and/or newly emerged viruses are continuously developed by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and implemented with the help of national experts in line with policy guidelines of the World Health Organization as follows:

(i) Taking all necessary measures to identify and register any research or laboratory activities regarding:

(a) Biological agents and toxins that are proved dangerous to humans or the environment if directly applied or if any change is made to them,

(b) New technology fields that would lead to production of new substances or new vectors whose biological or environmental effects could be dangerous to humans.

(ii) Respecting relevant World Health Organization guidelines and recommendations for organizing individuals and institutions directly or indirectly involved in any laboratory activities on biological agents and toxins through:

(a) Compilation of the regulations on application of biological agents and toxins,

(b) Development and issuance of governmental directives concerning security and safety precautionary measures for working with biological agents and toxins,

(c) Improving administrative and executive infra-structure for surveillance, discovery, diagnosis of, and combating communicable diseases affecting humans, animals and plants,

(d) Alignment of national policy guidelines with relevant international instruments in the framework of national legal system,

(e) Efforts for establishment of the necessary infra-structure in order to build a regional network of the relevant international bodies such as WHO, OIE and FAO.

5. Accordingly the legislative and executive organizations consider the following principles in their work:

(i) Strengthening preparedness level as well as safety and security measures in dealing with toxic or dangerous substances (through issuing directives for safety of physical facilities where biological experiments are conducted, establishing national standards, issuing directives for monitoring and surveillance of biological experiments as well as determining administrative and executive roles and responsibilities for conducting such experiments),

(ii) Taking maximum advantage of the active networks and existing potentials in the country (through expansion of training networks),

(iii) Utilizing global scientific resources such as those offered by the UN Agencies,

(iv) Close monitoring of any cases of violation of the Convention in different parts of the region and in any other part of the world as well as analysis of their human and environmental effects,

(v) Active participation in submitting the confidence building measures report,

(vi) Scientific cooperation both in theoretical as well as practical aspects for upgrading relevant International health regulations,

(vii) Holding training courses and specialized gatherings in order to establish scientific and ethical codes for scientists and experts.

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