Canadian INTERVENTION  
Agenda Item 12.6 : Smallpox eradication

Canada recognizes that while there is only limited value in retaining remaining stocks of variola virus for public health reasons, there remain some international security concerns - particularly those posed by recent breakthroughs in synthetic biology - which merit retaining the stocks.

We believe that the Director General and the Secretariat should seriously consider the recommendations made in the Independent Advisory Group’s report and by the Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research that live variola virus remains necessary for research into antiviral medication in relation to other infectious diseases, and the development of diagnostic assays. Therefore, we request that the Advisory Committee continue considering the implications of synthetic biology when it is appropriate to do so.

Canada supports the inspection process of the two global smallpox repositories through the provision of technical expertise via Canada’s designation as a WHO Collaborating Centre.

We look forward to the reports of the biosafety inspections conducted of the two authorized variola virus repositories.