

Wednesday 12th December 2007

The Second Day: Down to business

The 2007 Meeting of States Parties (MSP) for the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC/BWC) continued on Tuesday with an opening statement from Ronald Noble, Secretary-General of Interpol, who spoke of the bioterrorism work of his organization, including its desktop exercises and its 'train the trainers' programme.

In the afternoon, Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons – the international body for the Chemical Weapons Convention – addressed the Meeting. He noted that there were a number of similarities between the two arms control regimes in that both deal with materials that could be used for either hostile or for peaceful purposes and that both face challenges of national implementation and universality.

General Debate

The General Debate followed immediately from the Interpol statement in the morning, with Nigeria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Pakistan making plenary statements. A signatory state, the United Arab Emirates, also made a statement.

Germany highlighted its understanding that many states parties link BTWC national implementation with their 'National Authority' established under the CWC and that this was the motivation for German financial assistance to allow members of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to participate in the recent annual meeting of CWC National Authorities. The Netherlands focused specifically on its Working Paper about voluntary assistance for the ISU (discussed in *MSP report #2*) and highlighted that the paper 'provides a list of options States Parties might consider'. Pakistan noted that it had established a 'national focal point' for the BTWC which is now maintaining a 'National Information Database' on BWC implementation and which holds quarterly meetings of relevant stakeholders.

As before, where the plenary statements are accompanied by a printed version of the text, these will be placed on the BWPP website at the address given overleaf. This would appear to complete the general debate, although it is always possible that other states may wish to make an open statement later in the proceedings.

NGO statements

The morning's formal plenary was suspended for a short time to allow three NGOs to make statements as there had been insufficient time on Monday afternoon to hear them all. Pax

Christi International, the Research Group for Biological Arms Control, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom made statements.

Working sessions

After the NGO statements in the morning and after the OPCW statement in the afternoon, the Meeting moved into private 'Working sessions' dealing with Agenda Item 6 – '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'. Most of the statements made in these two sessions were either in relation to countries' own developments of their implementation measures or were in relation to Working Papers that had been submitted to the Meeting.

Although a longer time than had initially been planned for was spent on the General Debate, the Meeting is still broadly following the draft programme of work included in document BWC/MSP/2007/2.

Working Papers

As noted above, a number of working papers have been put forward by states parties and are available on paper in Geneva. However, only four of these had been made available electronically on the UN documents server by Tuesday night. A brief analysis of the working papers published so far will appear in the next of these reports. (Those documents that have been published electronically are now available from the BWPP MSP Resources web page.)

Side Event

Tuesday's lunchtime seminar, entitled 'Reaching out to the Final 36 – Overcoming Obstacles to the Universalization of the BTWC', was convened by the BioWeapons Prevention Project. This was the first side event of the Meeting of States Parties.

Ambassador Masood Khan (Pakistan), Chairman of the Meeting of States Parties, introduced the topic with a short presentation entitled 'Universalizing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention'. This was followed by a presentation on 'Surveying Universalization of the BTWC: Preliminary Results' by Kathryn McLaughlin (BWPP). A number of short prepared interventions were then given. Richard Lennane of the BWC Implementation Support Unit spoke on 'Despatches from the front: lessons learned from the 2007 universalization campaign'. Australian Ambassador Caroline Millar talked on 'Australia's universalization strategy in the Asia-Pacific region'. Ambassador José Pereira Gomes (Portugal, the current holder of the EU Presidency) spoke about 'The European Union's contribution to the goal of diversity'. Two members of the British delegation, Fiona Paterson and Jacqueline Daley, outlined 'The United Kingdom's initiatives and responsibilities as a depositary state'.

This is the third report from the Meeting of States Parties for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention which is being held from 10 to 14 December 2007 in Geneva. The reports are designed to help people who are not in Geneva to follow the proceedings.

The reports are prepared by Richard Guthrie on behalf of the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP). Copies of all of these reports (and details of how to subscribe to them by e-mail) are available on the BWPP website at <<<http://www.bwpp.org/2007MSP/MSP2007Resources.html>>>.

For press queries or any other questions relating to the Meeting of States Parties, please contact Dr Jean Pascal Zanders (+41 79 582 4454 or <<jpzanders@bwpp.org>>). For technical questions during the Meeting of States Parties relating to these reports, please contact Richard Guthrie (+41 76 507 1026 or <<rguthrie@bwpp.org>>).