

**STATEMENT**

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TO  
THE SIXTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT,  
PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL  
(BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

**Tuesday, 21 November 2006**

Mr President, Secretary-General **Caughley**, and Distinguished Representatives. It is a great honour to be invited to make a Statement to the Sixth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention which I am doing on behalf of the Department of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford in Yorkshire in the United Kingdom and with the explicit endorsement of the Vice Chancellor of the University. We consider that this Review Conference is of particular importance as it is taking place, following the successful annual Meetings of the States Parties in 2003, 2004 and 2005, when there is - and justifiably so - a new climate of optimism under which the regime totally prohibiting biological and toxin weapons can be effectively strengthened so addressing the international concern, anxiety and awareness of the dangers of the use of deliberate disease as a weapon of war or for terrorist purposes. We welcome and endorse your call, Mr. President, for a successful outcome based on common ground with added value.

Since the last comprehensive review of the Convention at the Fourth Review Conference in 1996 there have been significant developments relevant to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention:

- a. The entry into force on 29 April 1997 and subsequent implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention which covers all chemicals including toxins and thus, rightly, overlaps with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention;
- b. The scientific and technological developments in the life sciences relevant to the Convention. There have been major developments - indeed the 21st Century has been declared as the age of hiotechnology and genomics. These developments are of particular relevance not only to Article I - the basic prohibition - but also to Article VII - assistance in countering attacks - and to Article X technical cooperation.
- c. The increased concern world wide, and especially in the United States following the anthrax attacks in 2001, about the use of biological agents and toxins by non-State actors which underlines the importance of taking further the steps that were taken at the Fourth Review Conference to ensure that individuals or subnational groups are effectively prevented from acquiring or using such agents for other than peaceful purposes.
- d. The success of the annual Meetings of States Parties in 2003, 2004 and 2005 together with the increasing recognition of the accountability of States Parties for the Convention shows that the States Parties can work together to make effective progress to strengthen the Convention.
- e. The absence of any organisation or institution to steer the regime to totally prohibit biological weapons has become all the more glaring by comparison with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. When coupled with the rate at which major

developments are occurring in biotechnology and microbiology, there is a compelling argument for interim supportive institutions to nurture and sustain the regime against biological weapons.

As biological warfare is the deliberate use of disease against humans, animals or plants, all the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention need to seize the opportunity provided by the Sixth Review Conference to strengthen the Convention. The briefing book entitled "*Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention: Key Points for the Fifth Review Conference*" prepared by Nicholas Sims of the London School of Economics, Malcolm Dando and myself of the University of Bradford in association with the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva is intended to help achieve a successful outcome with added value.

Mr. President.

There are four principal issues that we would urge the Sixth Review Conference to address.

**First, the Convention** establishes the international norm "to exclude completely the possibility of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins being used as weapons". In the present heightened awareness of the dangers of biological warfare, whether by States or non-State actors, it is vitally important that this Review Conference in its Final Declaration reaffirms the basic prohibition of the Convention that biological weapons are totally prohibited and that the undertaking given by States Parties in Article I applies to all relevant scientific and technological developments in the life sciences as the past five years have seen immense progress in microbiology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, genomics, and proteomics.

**Second,** the Convention has 155 States Parties and 16 Signatory States. 23 States have neither signed nor acceded to the Convention. The Chemical Weapons Convention has 180 States Parties and 6 Signatory States. This Review Conference should set a target towards universality of 180 States Parties by the time of the Seventh Review Conference.

**Third,** the effectiveness of the Convention depends on the steps taken to achieve national implementation by the States Parties. This Review Conference should agree a programme to ensure that all States Parties have adopted national legislation, including penal legislation. Furthermore, the steps taken at the Fourth Review Conference to prevent non-State actors acquiring or using biological weapons need to be strengthened in respect of both Article III and Article IV of the Convention. **All** States Parties need to take comparable steps to strengthen their implementation of Article III and Article IV -- and to inform the other States Parties of the steps that they have taken.

Fourth, the States Parties should agree a further intersessional programme in 2007 to 2010 of annual Meetings of States Parties prepared by an earlier Meetings of Experts to consider and decide upon a range of issues including the following:

- The advances in science and technology relevant to the Convention (Article I)
- Progress towards effective national implementation in all States Parties (Article IV)
- Education and **outreach** to achieve in-depth implementation (Article IV)
- Improved Confidence-Building Measures (Article V)
- Provision of timely assistance to States Parties on request (Article VII)
- Facilitation of international cooperation (Article X)

These Annual Meetings should also consider reports on progress towards the target for universality and the progress on national implementation and make decisions on further action as appropriate.

The Secretariat are to be complimented on the way in which they have helped all of us to prepare for this Review Conference through the information that they have provided on the UNOG **website** on the Convention. This demonstrates the value that could be provided through an interim supportive institution to nurturing and maintaining the BTWC regime and to providing assistance to the States Parties as requested. This Review Conference should agree to set up an interim supportive institution to be reviewed at the Seventh Review Conference.

In conclusion, the Sixth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is of particular importance to the peace and security of all States Parties. We urge that in your deliberations you quickly identify the common ground and then explore how best you can add value to strengthen the regime. The States Parties should rise to the challenges and seize the opportunities available at the Sixth Review Conference to both reaffirm the norm that biological weapons are totally prohibited **and** strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention through appropriate measures.