

Statement of the  
**Landau Network - Centro Volta**  
to the  
**SIXTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE  
BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**  
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Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, and Distinguished Delegates. It is a great honour to have this opportunity to make a statement to the Sixth Review Conference of Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention on behalf of the Landau Network - Centro Volta (LNCV).

The Landau Network - Centro Volta (LNCV) is an Italian think-tank, specialising in non-proliferation and international security issues. Among our programmes, biological weapons proliferation prevention enjoys a high priority and for several years we have focused our efforts particularly on the risks stemming from past programmes in Russia and the Newly Independent States (NIS) in this regard. Initiatives and measures taken to address such risks represent a paradigm that could be adopted to address other past programmes.

Based on our experience in this field we strongly believe that biological weapons proliferation presents a spectrum of problems, risks and threats that international efforts need to address more effectively and in a coordinated manner. Responses to the biological weapons proliferation problem to date have largely consisted of efforts to totally prohibit biological weapons through the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), strengthen the international norm as embodied within the BTWC, implement export controls and employ national policies of biological defence and deterrence. A verifiable compliance regime for the BTWC continues to be the ultimate aim for this disarmament/non-proliferation regime and, therefore, this regime should remain the main framework within which different actors operate.

NGOs can play a key role in efforts to achieve effective BW non-proliferation due to their capacity to adapt and to operate in a broad range of contexts. Although crucial activities such as national implementation and legislation in the areas of biodefence, biosafety and security, nonproliferation export controls, and the pursuit and punishment of transgressors must be undertaken by States Parties, NGOs can assist in addressing the wide range of issues and work to promote nonproliferation through, *inter alia*, grassroots activities and advisory capacities to states and international organisations.

The Landau Network-Centro Volta aims to provide novel frameworks for both discussions and activities to address the threat posed by biological weapons. In our work on biological weapons non-proliferation, we believe that a new approach is necessary and that there are two

essential elements that must be recognised, pursued and implemented: one is a switch in focus towards a long-term science and technology partnership (as part of a strategy linking security, disarmament and development) to prevent misuse; the other is the potential involvement of a wider range of actors - not just defence and foreign policy authorities but other government departments, representative bodies, international organisations, industries, academia, private concerns and NGOs - which requires new policy approaches and cooperative networks.

It is necessary to recognize that a broad range of mechanisms are playing an increasingly important role in supporting efforts to stem biological weapons proliferation. That said, a multifaceted approach is mandatory: improving international disease control, establishing national oversight mechanisms for security and genetic engineering of pathogenic organisms, developing a universally recognised framework or code of ethical conduct, and promoting responsible conduct in the study, use, modification and shipment of pathogenic organisms are all elements which have to be implemented.

All these measures are fundamental, but represent the "defensive side" of the equation which addresses the risks related to biological weapons proliferation. Emphasis should not be only on 'threat reduction' or on preventing the illicit use of sensitive knowledge in the life sciences, but also on increasing the commercial potential of the institutes that were engaged in past programmes which need downsizing and redirection or that have to transform themselves to a knowledge-based economy.

The "human factor" represents one of the main elements of the above problem. One of the principle obstacles that non-state actors have faced in their attempts to acquire biological weapons capacities has been the lack of experts with the required skills. This does not mean that this situation will last forever. It is necessary to activate new redirection programmes - and "graduate" the current ones - aimed at equipping former biological weapons programme scientists with the ability to successfully face the challenges of the new globalised market and to employ their capacities in civilian projects.

In this context the Landau Network-Centro Volta, operating within the International Working Group for Transition Initiatives framework, has spent several years analysing, discussing and coordinating numerous international programmes for the economical diversification and redirection of the vast military complex of the Former Soviet Union (FSU). Our experience has shown that, in the context of biosecurity and biosafety, it is crucial to promote a scientific and cultural paradigm shift, starting from traditional biological weapons disarmament measures and moving to a broader partnership against biological weapons proliferation. This might be achieved by strengthening the international partnership with Russia/NIS in these sectors to ensure that these countries enhance their capabilities to prevent or deal with the accidental release or hostile use of pathogens, and play a full and constructive part in ensuring that the biotechnology revolution is used for legitimate purposes.

To summarise, a disaggregated approach - rather than a 'single bullet' one - is needed to develop new policy responses to address biological weapons proliferation. Policy-making under this new approach should not be restricted to state agencies, but will necessarily involve the range of expertise available outside governments and institutions. A cooperative network of measures to ameliorate the problems, while not directly leading to strengthening State Party compliance with the BTWC, could contribute to countering the risk of theft or diversion of materials, technologies and knowledge while reinforcing basic norms enshrined in the BTWC and in international law.