

## **BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION: MEETING OF STATES PARTIES 2007**

### *Chairman's Closing Remarks*

Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan

Chairman of the 2007 Meetings of the Biological Weapons Convention

**14 December 2007**

I think we have had a very productive meeting, and have at least made a good start on our goal of moving from adjacency to synergy in our efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention, in the areas we have been looking at of enhancing national implementation and regional and sub-regional cooperation. We heard the views from the highest levels of the organisations with which we must work ever more closely to achieve our shared objectives: the WHO, FAO, OIE, Interpol and the OPCW. We had innovative interactive discussions with civil society and industry representatives, and the feedback I have had so far indicates that States Parties found this interaction highly relevant and useful. I encourage you to continue to explore ways to integrate the knowledge, perspectives and expertise of these actors into our work next year.

Most importantly, we had very substantive, constructive and highly-focused contributions from the States Parties. The atmosphere of collaboration, creativity, quiet determination, and mutual support and respect was most impressive - and to anyone who witnessed BWC dealings five years ago, utterly extraordinary. And this atmosphere is reflected in the report we have just adopted. It is a substantive outcome. I said at the beginning of our meeting that our yardstick for measuring success should be: "will this report be a useful, practical tool for governments wanting to improve their implementation of the BWC?" I think that it will.

The report records in concise and accessible terms the measures and actions which States Parties consider important for effective national implementation and regional cooperation. The annex provides a further resource, listing ideas and options that States Parties might find useful. Importantly, I think our report will be a very helpful guide for those States Parties which were unable to participate in our meetings this year, and I encourage delegations to bring this report to the attention of relevant colleagues and officials in those countries.

I am also pleased with the results of our universalization efforts, and with the work of the ISU. Both these outcomes of the Review Conference have more than proved their worth, and I strongly encourage States Parties to continue to give every support to universalization activities and the work of the ISU.

Next year, we will move on, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Avramchev, to consider the topics of biosafety and biosecurity, and education and awareness-raising. These are challenging, complex topics, but I am sure that working in the same spirit we have shown this year, we will again have a productive outcome that genuinely improves the implementation of the Convention and reduces the risks of biological weapons being developed, acquired or used.

Ladies and gentlemen, the close of this meeting marks the end of my tenure as Chairman, and the conclusion of two eventful years at the helm of the Biological Weapons Convention. I do not want to make a long speech recounting the ups and downs, the turbulent times, the hopes, the problems, the frustrations or the triumphs. We travelled this road together, and you -- the States Parties -- were with me throughout: you know the story. All our achievements over the past two years are due to the collective decision of the States Parties that the Biological Weapons Convention was too important to abandon to political paralysis and infighting. You have worked with determination, resourcefulness and flexibility to overcome or work around your differences, and find solid, common ground on which to march forward in unison against the terrible threat posed by biological weapons. This is a highly significant achievement, especially in view of the divisions of the past, and the difficult circumstances surrounding so much of the wider multilateral disarmament agenda. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to play a part, dare I say a fairly significant part, in moving the Convention to a higher plane. It has been a challenging but ultimately very satisfying task for me. I have learnt a lot, and have been privileged to meet and talk to so many dedicated experts and officials, scientists, academics, and others, all working hard in the interests of our collective security. I would like to thank the States Parties for placing their trust in me as President of the Review Conference and Chairman of the meetings this year, and for supporting me throughout the past two years. It has been a pleasure and an honour to work with you, and I look forward to continuing our collaboration from the relative safety of the "back benches".

I am also grateful to those organisations and NGOs which have supported our efforts. Here I would like to mention the Geneva Forum -- in particular, Dr. Patrica Lewis, Dr. Patrick McCarthy and Mr. David Atwood -- and the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP), notably Dr. Jean Pascal Zanders and Ms. Kathryn McLaughlin.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to those who have worked with me to prepare and manage these meetings, first as the Secretariat, then as the ISU. Mr. Richard Lennane and Dr. Piers Millett have been with me from the very beginning, and this year they were joined by the very efficient and capable (as well as charming) Ms. Ngoc Phuong Huynh. Mr. Tim Caughley, the Director of the Geneva Branch of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, has been constant source of good counsel, support and assistance. And I would like to thank my own delegation for its hard work to support the BWC process. I am indebted to you all.

That is what I wanted to say by way of conclusion. Let me finish by thanking all delegations once more for their cooperation and support. I would like to apologise to the many delegations which directed kind remarks to me in the course of their statements: because of time constraints, I did not always acknowledge them at the time. But I thank you all most sincerely for your kind comments and words of support. I was also pleased to note the many acknowledgements of the valuable role and work of the Implementation Support Unit.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who work to support our meeting, in the room and behind the scenes. Let me thank our conference room officers: Ms. Sallahi, Mr. Meri, Ms. Semon and Mr. Babey, and the document distribution officer Mr. Rafael Pena yLillo; our interpreters, who have dealt most admirably with some highly technical material; our secretaries: Ms. Mercier and Ms. Glaser; our heroic documents officer, Ms. Norma Roulin, and Ms. Tatiana Bepalova and her team in the Documents Management Section; as well as all those who help to run the machinery of our meeting so smoothly.

Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes our business here. Thank you all, once again, for your cooperation, your support, and your active and constructive participation. We will meet again in Geneva on 18 August 2008 for the Meeting of Experts.

The 2007 Meeting of Experts is closed.

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