

# **Speaking Notes of Ambassador Masood Khan, Chairman of the 2007 Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties**

## **Group Meetings 14 November 2007**

Group of NAM and Other States: 10:00, Room XXII

Eastern European Group: 15:30, Room XXII

Western Group: 16:00, Room XXII

Mr. Chairman

Thank you for convening this meeting and inviting me to speak to the group once again. Now that delegations have returned from the First Committee, I thought it would be timely to meet to run through the arrangements for the forthcoming Meeting of States Parties (10 - 14 December), and discuss what we hope to achieve as an outcome on our two topics:

- (i) *Ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions.*
- (ii) *Regional and sub-regional cooperation on implementation of the Convention.*

I would also like to talk to you about our efforts to achieve universalisation, as this is something else that we will have to address formally at the Meeting of States Parties.

### Organisation of the meeting

I hope you have all received my letter to States Parties of 18 October, along with the enclosed synthesis paper and advance provisional agenda (if not, additional copies are available at the front of the room).

Let me start with the synthesis paper. This has been prepared along the same lines as in previous years, by consolidating the proposals and ideas that were recorded in the annex to the Report of the Meeting of Experts, removing duplications, and merging similar concepts. The result is, I hope, a reasonably clear, coherent and concise reflection of the proposals and ideas that you - the delegations - put forward on our two topics. It contains no new material, or any proposals made by myself. Of course, it cannot reflect every detail and nuance of the rich variety of material that was presented at the Meeting of Experts. But it is certainly not intended to exclude any proposal from consideration, and delegations are most welcome to make additional

proposals at the Meeting of States Parties. As in previous years, the synthesis is intended as food for thought, as a resource to help guide our work. And again, following standard practice, it will soon be issued as an official document in all languages. Let me reiterate two important points here:

- First, we will be working on the same basis as in previous years, on the same understandings about the scope of our mandate. Our task is to "promote common understanding and effective action", not to negotiate binding agreements.
- Second, all views and perspectives are welcome. We are not trying to exclude any points of view. States Parties will have different priorities, but all these can be reflected in a fair and transparent manner.

Our yardstick in considering a potential outcome will be: "will this report be a useful, practical tool for an official in a country which was not able to participate, who wants help with effectively implementing the BWC?"

Moving to the provisional agenda, I think this is straightforward. It is based on the agenda of previous years, but with the addition of two items explicitly mandated by the Sixth Review Conference: reports on universalization activities, and the report from the Implementation Support Unit. I will turn shortly to the handling of each of these new items, but for the moment I presume that the agenda itself does not cause any difficulties.

As for the schedule of the meeting, there are several matters to discuss. First, you will see that the agenda provides for a general debate. I would like to invite delegations to participate in this in a very focused way, that will add perspective and value to our consideration of the two topics, and really help us to "promote common understanding and effective action". I think that a particularly consistent message to emerge from the Meeting of Experts was that effective national implementation and regional cooperation require coordinated action from a variety of actors, across different sectors, including security, public health, law enforcement, agriculture, and others.

To help us focus on this, I have invited the heads of relevant international organisations to address the meeting and give us their perspectives. I am pleased to inform you that at this stage, the Director-General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and the Secretary-General of Interpol, have kindly accepted the invitation and will address the meeting. I hope you will give them a warm and attentive welcome, and make the most of this opportunity to improve coordination and develop synergies at the highest levels.

Then there are of course the very important views of the States Parties themselves, and we must carefully organise our work so that we can shape

these into a useful outcome. As I said in my letter, we should aim for a product that genuinely promotes common understanding and that will help States Parties, including those which are not able to participate in our meetings, to take effective action on our two topics. Delegations may find it helpful to use the synthesis paper as a guide to our discussions, but we should be flexible on this. I think we should keep an open mind on the exact form of our outcome, and work together to find a way to reflect our common understandings in a clear and accessible product.

Another lesson I drew from the Meeting of Experts, and indeed from my experience as President of the Sixth Review Conference, is that constructive engagement with civil society is a vital component of effective national implementation of the BWC. With this in mind, it is desirable to engage civil society and industry in a more effective manner at this meeting. I would like to give States Parties the chance to hear the views of commercial industry, as this is a voice that has so far been rather lacking in our deliberations. We can have two special informal sessions of our meeting. One will be early in the week, probably on the Monday afternoon, when I will invite NGO representatives to engage in a dialogue with the Chair. The second will be on the Thursday, when we will be able to hear the perspectives of industry representatives. Both these sessions will be informal meetings, and will not change the formal status of participation for NGOs or anyone else in the BWC meetings and conferences. I will explore how best to configure these sessions.

Once we have confirmed the arrangements for our high-level guests, and the NGO and industry segments, I will issue a provisional programme of work, assigning suitable time for consideration of each topic, as well as for the two new items on our agenda.

### Universalization

The first of these new items is universalization. As you will recall, the Sixth Review Conference took a number of decisions aimed at promoting universalization, and gave specific tasks to States Parties, and to me as Chairman. The Conference also required regular reporting on the tasks assigned: States Parties are requested to "report, as appropriate, on their activities at annual meetings of States Parties". And the Chairman is requested to "provide an annual report on universalization activities at Meetings of States Parties".

As you might recall from the interim report I gave at the Meeting of Experts, we had a promising first half of the year, with four new accessions. Since then, I have undertaken a number of activities. I wrote to the foreign ministers of the four new States Parties to thank them. I wrote again to the foreign ministers of states not party urging accession, and to signatories urging ratification. On the margins of the First Committee in New York, I met a number of representatives of states not party, including some who are not

represented in Geneva. Staff of the ISU travelled to The Hague and met CWC national authority representatives of states which are party to the CWC but not to the BWC. And on 6 November I hosted a lunch here in Geneva for representatives of states not party.

All these activities have provided useful feedback. I will be providing a detailed report on the contacts I have had with states not party, and on the activities the ISU has undertaken to promote universalization. My report will contain some useful information I have obtained on the progress in certain states towards ratification. To complete the picture we need feedback from States Parties - from yourselves - on your own efforts to promote universalization. I know that initiatives have been taken by groups and individual states to step up their own efforts for universalization.

We have a little over three weeks until the Meeting of States Parties. That is still time for communications and demarches, and for informing the ISU of the results so that they can be incorporated into my formal report. I would also strongly encourage States Parties to make brief oral reports to the Meeting of States Parties. I understand that the EU has embarked on a fresh round of demarches, and is still hoping to convene its regional seminar in the Middle East. I encourage others to redouble their own efforts. To help focus your work, I am circulating an informal paper today that lists the information we have so far on states not party. The same information is available on the restricted area of the BWC website, [www.unog.ch/bwc](http://www.unog.ch/bwc). I hope you will be able to add to the information we have, and to move our universalization effort forward.

Another issue I would like to raise here is that two signatories, Burundi and Côte d'Ivoire, and one state not party, Comoros, have requested financial assistance to enable them to participate in the Meeting of States Parties. I appeal to you to consider providing such assistance, in the interest of securing an important opportunity to build understanding of the benefits of joining the BWC, and to lobby relevant officials for accession. Of course, any such assistance should be linked to guarantees that the accession process is underway, or at least being seriously considered. If you think you may be able to help, please contact the ISU.

### Report of the ISU

The second of the new items, the report of the Implementation Support Unit, will I think be routine, but I would encourage delegations to respond to the report, to interact with the ISU, and discuss how this important new initiative is progressing. The report will also include a section on participation in the confidence-building measures (CBMs), and there will be time to discuss this also.

## Conclusion

The Meeting of States Parties provides us with an important opportunity to develop and refine the very useful material assembled at the Meeting of Experts, and produce an outcome that will genuinely improve the implementation of the Convention. We will also be able to consider our progress on some important tasks set by the Sixth Review Conference. I hope all States Parties will participate with the same energy, determination and flexibility they brought to the Review Conference and the Meeting of Experts. I am confident that we can round off a productive year with a comprehensive consensus result, and lay the foundations for the important work that awaits us in 2008

That is what I wanted to say. Now I would be very interested to hear your views, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.