

## **Biological Weapons Convention: Meeting of Experts 2007**

### **Closing Remarks of the Chairman, Ambassador Masood Khan (Pakistan)**

*Geneva, 24 August 2007*

I think it is fair to say that we have had a very useful and constructive meeting. We have focused on national measures in a large number of States Parties, across all regions. We have heard a wide range of perspectives, from States Parties of different sizes, different situations, and varying systems of government and administration. We have had broad overviews of approaches to national implementation, and highly detailed technical expositions of particular aspects of enforcement, interagency coordination, regional cooperation, and export controls. As well as the contributions from States Parties, we have had the benefit of highly relevant and useful input from Interpol and from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. And we also benefited from the helpful contributions of a number of non-governmental organizations.

We have enjoyed some very positive interaction, both here in the room, and – just as importantly – on the margins, in the corridors, in the coffee lounge, and over lunches and dinners. This blend of formal and informal interaction among experts is one of the great benefits of the intersessional work programme.

The result is that experts from across different departments and agencies have had the opportunity to share information and experiences. The meeting has developed synergies both within and across delegations. Experts will go back to their capitals and engage with their governments with a broader perspective, new ideas, and greater confidence. This will help move the BWC higher on national agendas, and will give a renewed impetus to national implementation and regional cooperation activities in many States Parties.

We have heard a range of ideas, advice and proposals, and certain themes have consistently emerged. One is that there is no “one size fits all” solution for national implementation: we need to develop an approach that can be tailored to the individual circumstances and needs of each State Party. This was elegantly articulated by the OPCW, which suggested that an “implementation checklist” was a more useful tool than model legislation. Another common theme was the need to make use of the Implementation Support Unit as a catalyst in better coordinating and managing activities. A further important point, which was alluded to in several presentations, is that there is a need to help States Parties build capacity. It is not enough to provide guidance on enacting legislation and regulations: States Parties need practical assistance to build their capacity to enforce and manage such measures. On this point, I am pleased to note that several delegations – including the European Union, the United States, India and Pakistan – used this meeting to announce their readiness to provide assistance for national implementation. I hope others will follow their example.

While we can all be pleased with the results of the Meeting of Experts, there are also some lessons we can draw, and improvements we can make for the future. Many delegations would appreciate more intensive discussion and interaction, with the opportunity for questions and answers straight after each presentation. Some have observed that short, focused presentations are more useful than long ones, although many consider that long presentations are justified if such detailed material is relevant. Some suggested that “pre-screening” and thematic grouping of presentations would be helpful to more focused

discussion. I think we should weigh this very carefully, so that pre-screening does not mean pre-censorship. Many find PowerPoint a useful aid, and would encourage presenters to make use of it. These are all helpful suggestions which we will integrate into our planning for the Meeting of States Parties, and indeed for the meetings in subsequent years.

The topics we have dealt with this week – national implementation and regional and sub-regional cooperation – are in a sense all-encompassing. They cover subjects, such as biosecurity, codes of conduct, disease surveillance, and response, that will be dealt with in detail in the coming years of the intersessional work programme. As such, our work this year forms an excellent introduction to the work programme as a whole. The presentations we have heard this week have touched on several topics that we will return to in more detail in 2008, 2009 and 2010. I hope that this introduction will stimulate thinking and preparation for the important work ahead.

For the Meeting of States Parties in December, I will be writing to all delegations to outline my plans, and will consult closely in the coming months. As in previous years, I will prepare a synthesis paper that distills the essence of the many ideas and proposals we have annexed to our report. I am anxious to make the most of the week available to us, and plan to develop an intensive programme of work. I think it is important that the Meeting of States Parties produces an outcome that is of practical benefit to national implementation and regional cooperation efforts, especially for States Parties which are not able to participate in our meetings. Those States Parties which participate in our meetings gain significant benefit from the interaction and exchange of information, and would benefit even if the meeting produced no report at all. But we must keep in mind the interests and needs of the entire membership of the Convention, especially the smaller States Parties which are often those most in need of assistance and encouragement. For this reason, a substantive outcome encapsulating our work and collective wisdom is very important.

That is what I wanted to say by way of conclusion. Let me finish by thanking all delegations 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 pleased to note the many acknowledgements of the valuable role and work of the Implementation Support Unit. I add my own thanks to the ISU and its staff – Mr. Richard Lennane, Mr. Piers Millett and Ms. Phuong Huynh – for their hard work and thorough preparation for this meeting. I thank Mr. Tim Caughley, Director of the Geneva Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, both for his support for the meeting and for the administrative arrangements he has made for the ISU. I urge all States Parties to continue to work closely with the ISU, to make the most of this most promising new resource for the Convention.

I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the support of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, who joined us for the opening of this meeting and the launch of the ISU, as well as the United Nations Information Service and the media representatives who have helped to raise awareness of our work here. And I would like to thank my own delegation for its hard work to support the BWC process.

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: Mr. Goetz, Ms. Varela, Ms. Akram, Mr. Ganbold and Mr. Hatfield; our interpreters, who have dealt most admirably with

some highly technical material; our secretaries: Ms. Mercier and Ms. Glaser; and our heroic documents officer, Ms. Norma Roulin; 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 10 December 2007 for the Meeting of States Parties.

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