

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

### **Interim Report by the Chairman, Ambassador Masood Khan (Pakistan), on Universalization Activities**

*Geneva, 24 August 2007*

The Sixth Review Conference agreed that the Chairs of the Meetings of States Parties would coordinate universalization activities, address states not party to the Convention, and provide an annual report on universalization activities at Meetings of States Parties. I thought it would be useful to provide an interim report at this Meeting of Experts, in order to guide and encourage States Parties in their efforts to promote universalization between now and the Meeting of States Parties in December.

In accordance with my mandate to address states not party to the Convention, earlier this year I wrote in my capacity as Chairman to the foreign ministers of states not party, urging them both to accede to the Convention and to provide information on their intentions and progress. I also advised them that they were likely to be approached by individual States Parties on a bilateral or regional basis, and that many States Parties would be prepared to offer support and assistance for the accession process.

I have so far received two replies: one from Mozambique, the other from Israel:

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, Dr. Alcinda Antonio de Abreu, wrote to me on 4 June 2007 stating that “the process for accession by the Republic of Mozambique to the Convention is at an advanced stage and hopefully will be concluded very soon”;
- A representative of the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel wrote to me on 23 July 2007 stating that Israel shared the view that “the threat of biological warfare is indeed an ominous one” but that “regional circumstances...cannot be overlooked by Israel upon any consideration of the issue of possible accession to the BTWC.” The letter goes on to say that “It is our sincere hope that the future will yield improved regional circumstances which would allow a renewed consideration of this issue”.

So it is a mixed result so far. The situation of Mozambique is promising, and I would suggest there may be benefit in States Parties staying in close contact with Mozambique in order to encourage a prompt conclusion of the accession process.

As we have heard earlier this week, four new members have joined the Convention since the Sixth Review Conference: Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Trinidad and Tobago, and Gabon. This brings the number of States Parties to 159. This is pleasing progress, and is due to the efforts of several States Parties to encourage and persuade these four states to join. I would like to acknowledge in particular the efforts of the Depositaries – the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States – as well as the Joint Action of the European Union. If we can maintain this rate of progress of three to four accessions every six months, we are on track to secure universal adherence by the Seventh Review Conference in 2011.

But maintaining such progress will require both hard work and intensive coordination. All States Parties can play a part, by raising the issue of BWC accession with states not party, by placing the issue on ministerial agendas, by exploiting contacts at different levels and in different agencies, by using regional forums, and in general by seizing every possible opportunity. Coordination in this effort is vital. I would urge States Parties to use the Implementation Support Unit's secure website to check on the latest news on contacts with states not party, so that contacts and lobbying can be better harmonized and targeted. And I appeal to States Parties to report their own efforts and contacts promptly to the ISU, so that other States Parties can benefit in planning their efforts.

I myself will intensify my efforts between now and December, and will be working closely with States Parties, and with regional organizations such as the African Union, the European Union and the Organization of American States, to open constructive contacts with states not party and to secure further accessions.

I look forward to having further progress to report at the Meeting of States Parties in December.

---