



**VII Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention
Statement by Mr. Neil Benevides,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to the Conference on
Disarmament**

Mr. President,

First and foremost, I would like to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention.

My delegation is confident that your wise guidance presiding over our work in the following three weeks will lead us to a positive outcome at the end of this Conference. For that, you may count on the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation.

Mr. President,

The BWC, as the first disarmament multilateral treaty to ban a whole category of weapons of mass destruction, constitutes an expression of international cooperation and multilateral negotiations. Brazil believes that the effective contribution of the Convention to international and regional peace and security would be enhanced through universal adherence to the Convention.

We congratulate and welcome those States that have adhered or ratified the BWC since the last Review Conference.

The time is ripe for us to move towards biological disarmament and non-proliferation. The present Conference constitutes a crucial opportunity for

States Parties to the BWC to send a clear signal to international community that it is possible to strengthen international security regimes through multilateral negotiation.

Mr. President,

The remarkable progress witnessed lately in life sciences is certainly one important factor to be considered in this BWC review exercise. The dynamics of the review process ought to be in line with scientific and industrial developments, particularly in the fields of biotechnology and biogenetics.

Likewise, international community, in general, and Brazil, in particular, is concerned about possible misuse of biological research. The harmonization between security concerns and access to technological advancements is an issue that should be addressed by this Review Conference.

Brazil also supports reviewing and enhancing confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the BWC. By updating and simplifying CBMs, countries may find it easier to submit them annually. We believe they should increasingly become a mechanism for transparency and trust. However, CBMs should not be used as a proxy-verification mechanism, nor should they become compulsory.

Mr. President,

Brazil firmly believes that the full, effective and non discriminatory implementation of Article X is essential for the realization of the objectives and purpose of this Convention. Exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful uses of biological agents and toxins should be promoted and should not hinder the economic and technological development of States Parties.

Furthermore, we would like to stress that technology transfer and international cooperation may serve as an incentive for more States to adhere to the BWC and to guarantee biological substances will be exclusively used for peaceful purposes.

Mr. President,

Brazil endorses the work that has been carried out by the Implementation Support Unit during the intersessional period. It is a modest structure, both in terms of staff and budget, which has managed nonetheless to achieve an efficient work since its inception in the last Review Conference. This expertise ought not to be wasted.

For that matter, my country supports the renewal of its mandate until the VIII Review Conference in 2016. We also support the idea that has been put forward by some delegations of granting the ISU a coordinating role in matters of international cooperation, making it similar to a "clearing house".

Brazil believes an "enhanced ISU" can only be considered after we decide on the structure and future activities for the next intersessional period. Furthermore, we would need to better understand the implications in terms of costs for an expanded ISU. Finally, should the Conference decide to strengthen the ISU, it would be fair to envisage a personnel policy so as to allow for a rotating and geographically balanced distribution.

It should also be clear that the ISU will keep administrative and executive functions. It cannot be attributed any role in judging State Parties in their implementation of the Convention and/or in their submission of CBMs.

Mr. President,

As for the next intersessional period, my country would favor proposals for creating 'open-ended groups' with a substantive mandate and for a fixed time-frame. These groups could discuss the improvement of practices and mechanisms for implementing the BWC. We believe their recommendations could be taken for perusal at the annual Meeting of State Parties, for a final decision at the five-yearly Review Conference.

Mr. President,

A key element of the operation of any multilateral treaty is compliance by all State Parties with their obligations. It is critically important for States parties to be collectively reassured that the provisions of the Convention are being realized.

Brazil and other like-minded countries are willing to pursue the debate and negotiations towards the adoption of a verification protocol, but we understand that this must be a consensual decision taken by the State Parties to the BWC.

Thank you.