

STATEMENT

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TO

THE SEVENTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE

CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT,

PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL

(BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

Tuesday, 6 December 2011

Mr President, Secretary-General, and Distinguished Representatives. It is a great honour to be invited to make a Statement to the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention which I am doing on behalf of the Division of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford in Yorkshire in the United Kingdom and with the explicit endorsement of the Vice Chancellor of the University. We consider that this Review Conference is of particular importance as it follows the successful annual Meetings of the States Parties in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. There is justifiably a great sense of optimism that under your leadership *realistic ambitions* will be achieved that will effectively strengthen the regime totally prohibiting biological and toxin weapons so addressing the international concern, anxiety and awareness of the dangers of the use of deliberate disease as a weapon of war or for terrorist purposes. Certainly no Review Conference has been as well prepared as this one with the series of workshops around the world at Wilton Park, Beijing, Montreux, Berlin, Manila and Clingandael, with the material available in the Think Zone, and the advance copies of documents for this Review Conference. Our expectations are justifiably high and we welcome and endorse your call, Mr. President, for this Review Conference to achieve *realistic ambitions* in its successful outcome.

Since the last comprehensive review of the Convention at the Sixth Review Conference in 2006 there have been significant developments relevant to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention:

- a. There have been major scientific and technological developments in the life sciences relevant to the Convention – indeed the 21st Century has been declared as the age of biotechnology and genomics. These developments are of particular relevance not only to Article I – the basic prohibition – but also to the other Articles of the Convention.
- b. The continuing concern world wide about the use of biological agents and toxins by non-State actors underlines the importance of taking further the steps that were taken at the Sixth Review Conference and by the Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee to ensure that individuals or subnational groups are effectively prevented from acquiring or using such agents for other than peaceful purposes.
- c. The success of the annual Meetings of States Parties in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 together with the increasing recognition that the States Parties can work together to make effective progress to strengthen the Convention.
- d. The success of the three person Implementation Support Unit in supporting the implementation of the Convention and the recognition of how much more an enlarged ISU could significantly strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention make agreement on expansion of the ISU a vital objective for this Review Conference.

As biological warfare is the deliberate use of disease against humans, animals or plants, all the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention need to seize the opportunity provided by the Seventh Review Conference to strengthen the Convention. The briefing book entitled *"Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention: Key Points for the Seventh Review Conference"* edited by Nicholas Sims of the London School of Economics, Malcolm Dando and myself of the University of Bradford is intended to help achieve ambitions which are both realistic and vital.

Mr. President.

There are five realistic outcomes – which are entirely attainable – that we would urge the Seventh Review Conference to achieve.

First, the Convention establishes the international norm *"to exclude completely the possibility of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins being used as weapons"*. In the continuing heightened awareness of the dangers of biological warfare, whether by States or non-State actors, it is vitally important that this Review Conference in its Final Declaration reaffirms the basic prohibition of the Convention that biological weapons are totally prohibited. And also reaffirms that the undertaking given by States Parties in Article I applies to all relevant scientific and technological developments in the life sciences since the past five years have seen immense progress in microbiology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, genomics, and proteomics. In addition, we urge that a standing working group be established to consider the application and implications of scientific and technological developments in specific areas for all the Articles of the Convention.

Second, the Convention has 165 States Parties and 12 Signatory States. 19 States have neither signed nor acceded to the Convention. The Chemical Weapons Convention has 188 States Parties and 2 Signatory States. This Review Conference should set a target towards universality of 190 States Parties by the time of the Eighth Review Conference. In addition, Mr. President, it is realistic that you should lead a troika made up of the Chair of the Committee of the Whole and the Chair of the Drafting Committee and yourself to work closely with the Depositaries and provide the necessary continued leadership and momentum on universalisation through to the next Review Conference.

Third, the effectiveness of the Convention depends on the steps taken to achieve national implementation by the States Parties. This Review Conference should demonstrate its commitment to an effective Convention by agreeing an Action Plan to ensure that all States Parties have adopted national legislation, including penal legislation. Furthermore, the Implementation Support Unit should work closely with the Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee to strengthen the measures to prevent non-State actors acquiring or using biological weapons. Moreover, States Parties need to take effective action nationally to ensure the education and awareness of all those engaged in the life sciences of their responsibilities to ensure that biological materials are not misused. All States Parties need to

take steps to strengthen their implementation of Article III and Article IV – and to inform the other States Parties of the steps that they have taken.

Fourth, the States Parties should agree a further intersessional programme between 2011 and 2016/in 2012 to 2105 of annual Meetings of States Parties prepared by standing working groups addressing the following three separate and distinct topics:

- The advances in science and technology in specific areas relevant to the Convention
- An improved Confidence-Building Measures regime
- Confidence in compliance

and/or an earlier Meeting of Experts to consider particular annual topics. These Annual Meetings should also consider reports on progress towards the target for universality and the progress on the national implementation Action Plan as well as progress on international cooperation and assistance. The Annual Meetings should make decisions on further action as appropriate.

Fifth, the Implementation Support Unit is to be complimented on its outstanding work since the Sixth Review Conference. However, it would not be realistic to expect that the extended activities – which should include a specific clearing house activity on international cooperation and assistance – to be agreed by this Review Conference could be carried out by the present three person ISU. For the further effective strengthening of the Convention it is essential that the ISU is enlarged so that it can indeed carry out its mandate agreed by this Review Conference.

In conclusion, the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is of particular importance to the peace and security of all States Parties. The preparations over the past 18 months have already identified much common ground and many States Parties have submitted advance copies of their papers to strengthen the regime. The States Parties should rise to the challenges and achieve the realistic ambitions at the Seventh Review Conference to both reaffirm the norm that biological weapons are totally prohibited and strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention through at least the steps outlined above. And, we would encourage you to achieve even more than the outcomes outlined in this statement.

Thank you, Mr. President.