



**STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL
PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

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Statement by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute at the Seventh Review Conference to the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to be here today and to make this statement. I would also like to thank the organizers for arranging this event.

In September of this year the President of the Seventh Review Conference, Ambassador Paul van den IJssel, informed a BTWC regional group meeting that consultations among the parties have focused on:

- (a) the future of the inter-sessional process, confidence-building measures (CBMs) and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU),
- (b) the need to monitor and assess science and technology (S&T) developments,
- (c) strengthening international cooperation and assistance (Article X),
- (d) possibilities for compliance and verification, and
- (e) treaty universality.

Should the conference agree a further intersessional process, the topics considered could, to varying degrees, be informed by S&T elements relevant to the various articles of the convention. Such an approach would help to promote the capacity of the regime to agree focused, operational activity in coming years.

The amount of information on S&T activity is open-ended. It is nevertheless vital to review the main relevant trends and methods or approaches that may



be employed in order to understand the implications of such activity for biological arms control. The parties must recognize the implications of any paradigm shift emanating from S&T developments—both with respect to the prohibition of biological warfare and to scientific and economic cooperation and development.

With respect to CBMs, this conference may wish to consider the desirability of revising the information-exchange format agreed by the Second and Third Review Conferences, including whether and how they could to be modified to serve as a basis for achieving capacity-building objectives on a practical and technical level, such as for the improvement of the operation of life sciences laboratories. Form D on the ‘active promotion of contacts’ could perhaps be considered in this respect.

The parties, including through any further intersessional processes, may wish to revisit the question of whether and how the current CBM formats adequately reflect S&T developments. In particular, they may wish to agree measures to improve understanding of relevant S&T trends in order to ensure that the norm against biological warfare is maintained and to ensure the full implementation of economic cooperation and assistance in the regime.

The parties could further consider the modalities for exchanging information on S&T review approaches, including through the modification of CBM templates or through an intersessional process. Such elements could include the development of criteria having potential applicability for S&T oversight mechanisms, the type of S&T reviews generally encountered—both domestically and internationally (e.g. to assess economic cooperation and development)—and indicators for assessing the impact of S&T reviews on BTWC implementation.

With respect to Article X, the parties may wish to consider further the desirability and modalities for (a) exchanging operationally focused, time-

limited proposals, and (b) requests or offers that support and strengthen relevant economic development and cooperation. The parties may also wish to consider ways to achieve a better understanding of the specific type of cooperation possible under the BTWC regime. This would provide ‘granularity’ to the higher-level political commitments and statements of support. The ISU could facilitate such a process partly based on its experience in collecting and facilitating consultation on annual CBM submissions.

The parties may wish to consider structures and approaches (along with relevant political and other support) necessary to achieve a target number (or range) of members. The membership of the BTWC should be brought in line with that of the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The capacity of the BTWC regime to strengthen compliance and verification can be improved partly through consultation on S&T assessments and the sharing of best practices on S&T evaluation methodologies. It is desirable for the BTWC regime to have a consultative (or similar) mechanism in order to consider the implications of S&T developments affecting both the BTWC and CWC. Such a mechanism (or ‘operating space’) could include the involvement of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The parties should also continue to discuss and achieve a better understanding of developments in the research community and industry, including the possible relevance of the experience of the International Gene Synthesis Consortium (IGSC) in its attempts to ensure that DNA-sequencing technology is not misused.

The ISU represents an important element of support capacity to the BTWC regime, including with respect to supporting any further intersessional processes and the facilitation of consultation and other interaction among the member states, academia, industry, NGOs and civil society.



SIPRI attaches the highest importance to the BTWC. We hope that this conference is successful in helping to maintain and strengthen the norms and principles embodied by the regime, including through optimally structured, focused activity and work programme over the coming years.

Thank you.

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