

**Joint Statement by the JACKSNNZ (Japan, Australia, Canada,
Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway, and New Zealand) to the
Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties,
December 10, 2012**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is my pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the JACKSNNZ group of countries: Japan, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand. We welcome your chairmanship of our meetings this year, and are confident that your leadership will help us achieve an effective result this week.

We are also happy to see fellow JACKSNNZ partner, Switzerland, as well as Poland, in the new role of Vice-Chairs. You can be assured that you and our distinguished Vice-Chairmen have the full support of the JACKSNNZ group.

Mr. Chairman, the JACKSNNZ note with satisfaction that some positive steps were taken at the Seventh Review Conference last December. Under the leadership of Ambassador Paul van den IJssel of the Netherlands, the States Parties to the BTWC were able to reach consensus on a number of forward-looking initiatives. The Conference showed that strengthening the BTWC is a long-term project, but also that there are urgent priorities that require our attention. While States Parties were unable to agree on important proposals aimed at improving the Convention, some useful incremental steps were taken. Our new programme of work, wherein we cover three standing agenda items and a fourth biennial topic, represents a positive step forward in addressing the substance of our Convention in a more focussed manner.

Last July, our new programme of work was tested with the first Meeting of Experts of the intersessional process. Scientific and technical experts from States Parties, along with international and non-governmental organizations, were able to share views on strengthening national implementation, review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention, cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X, and enabling fuller participation in confidence-building measures. We congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, for launching a useful initial exchange and encourage you to further refine the meeting arrangements in order to take better advantage of, and benefit more from, the

technical expertise of the meeting's speakers. This week's event, the first of the new Meeting of States Parties, gives the chance to discuss the policy aspects of the agreed-upon themes, taking into account the discussions that took place in July and the Chair's recommendations. Our working methods this week will also likely represent a good first effort, which will need refinement in the coming years. But this MSP has the opportunity to identify effective action that could be taken individually or collectively, as appropriate, to address the challenges we are facing.

Mr. Chairman, the JACKSNNZ would like to thank you for your hard work in developing the synthesis paper, which you circulated to us on the 27th of September. We believe this is a useful starting point for our negotiations. We particularly like the generally balanced approach that the paper takes between the issues of implementation and cooperation, and how it addresses the issues of science and technology considered by States Parties, international and non-governmental organizations, and the Implementation Support Unit. There are elements that require refinement and negotiation, and we look forward to discussing them over the coming week.

At this time, the JACKSNNZ would like to highlight our views on key agenda items.

Firstly, the JACKSNNZ believe that effective national implementation remains the cornerstone of the BTWC. Strengthening implementation at the national, regional, and international levels remains the best way available to States Parties to ensure their compliance with their obligations under Article I and thereby enhancing the Convention's security norm. Therefore, at the 2010 MSP and the Review Conference, we pressed for issues of national implementation to be taken up in the 2012-2015 intersessional process, including matters related to improving confidence in compliance. In this regard, JACKSNNZ members have been actively engaged in developing options to further explore means of improving national implementation. For example, Canada and Switzerland have submitted a paper, which is an update to our Compliance Assessment initiative, in order to further demonstrate that options to evaluate compliance and implementation exist outside of legally-binding protocols. We would also like to highlight a Canadian working paper and a side event being held Tuesday at 9:00am on the subject of dual-use education and awareness-raising.

Secondly, JACKSNNZ countries were among those calling for an annual review of science and technology at the Review Conference. The biological sciences are rapidly advancing, giving rise to new benefits for humanity but also new risks as they relate to

biological weapons. It is essential that the political experts leading BTWC discussions remain aware of the latest scientific developments, and the risks posed by these, so that actions taken by the MSP or Review Conference be well informed.

Thirdly, on the subject of Article X, the JACKSNNZ group remains committed to international cooperation and collaboration in fields related to health and the life sciences. Such cooperation is essential to curbing the threat of disease, be it naturally occurring or the result of a deliberate biological weapons attack. In this regard, Canada will be tabling a paper describing its relevant ongoing international cooperation projects. Furthermore, we would like to highlight that Australia has contributed to the sponsorship programme and Canada has provided new information for the Cooperation and Assistance Database. We encourage any States Parties requiring assistance or seeking cooperation partners come see JACKSNNZ delegations.

It is increasingly recognized that governments alone cannot confront the risks posed by biological weapons. A cohesive, coordinated network of activities and resources is needed to manage the full spectrum of biological risks. Norway has decided to fund an international workshop for non-governmental stakeholders who may be able to play a direct role in coordinated action to manage biological risks more effectively, especially in developing countries.

I would also underscore that the JACKSNNZ renew our call for universality in the BTWC. We congratulate the Republic of the Marshall Islands for acceding to the Convention last month. JACKSNNZ countries have performed outreach with non-members, including Andorra, Cameroon, and Myanmar, through demarches in capitals and with delegations in Geneva and New York. Switzerland, in its role as Vice-Chair, held a BTWC outreach event on the margins of the UN First Committee in New York in October 2012. We call for signatories to ratify and States not party to accede to the BTWC at their earliest opportunity.

Lastly, Confidence Building Measures remain an essential tool for transparency for the BTWC. All seven JACKSNNZ countries have submitted CBMs, most of which are available publicly on the ISU website. We encourage all States Parties to submit returns annually. We are pleased that the Review Conference managed to refine elements of the CBM forms, but more needs to be done to address the well-known shortcomings of this process. We believe further refinements are needed to improve the functionality of the

CBM forms and encourage further States Parties to submit them. We continue to see value in developing an electronic CBM submission tool, and translation, where possible, of CBMs into other UN languages. We would like to highlight that Canada's Global Partnership Program has voluntarily funded the translation of several CBMs, which we will discuss later this week.

Mr. Chairman, we have a full agenda of work to get through during this session. The functioning and outcome of this MSP will help set the stage for the rest of the 2012-2015 intersessional process, but we are off to a good start. Under your leadership, we are confident that we will end the MSP with consensus on a balanced text that will help us advance the work of the BTWC.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.