

STATEMENT

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TO

**THE MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT,
PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL
(BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

Monday, 10 December 2012

Mr Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairmen and Distinguished Representatives. It is a great honour to be invited to make a Statement to the Meeting of the States Parties to 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 Meeting of States Parties is of particular importance as it is the first one in the Intersessional Period following the Seventh Review Conference in December 2011.

We greatly welcome the establishment of the three Standing Agenda items on Cooperation and Assistance, on developments in science and technology related to the Convention, and on strengthening national implementation. We also welcome the topic to be addressed in both 2012 and 2013 of enabling fuller participation in the CBMs.

In order to assist delegations in preparing for the Meeting of States Parties, the University of Bradford has issued two further Briefing Papers. These are both available at http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/sbtwc/briefing/three_bw_briefing.htm No. 5 looks at biosecurity education for the life sciences and explores the useful model that is provided by nuclear security education. No. 6 examines what has happened since the Seventh Review Conference and examines how the potential of the BTWC Intersessional Process 2012 – 2015 can be maximized.

Mr. Chairman

The States Parties at the Seventh Review Conference recognized that the time had come for the Intersessional Process to move forward to a more **sustained** and **continuing** consideration of three key elements of the Convention – *the review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention, strengthening national implementation and cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X*. In addition, the Intersessional Process will consider a biennial topic – which for 2012 – 2013 is *how to enable fuller participation in the CBMs*. As the mandate of the Intersessional Process is *to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action*, it is to be expected that **each year** at the Meeting of States Parties the report will set out what has been achieved during that year to *promote common understanding and effective action*. In other words, the **annual** Meeting of States Parties will be expected to set out common understandings and effective action **agreed that year** as well as looking ahead to the coming year and giving any guidance as to what the Meeting of Experts and the next Meeting of States Parties should address.

Furthermore, it is also evident that in deciding on the three Standing Agenda items the Seventh Review Conference recognized that these three items are **central** to the effectiveness of the Convention. It follows that their consideration in an integrated and comprehensive way would maximize the benefits to the Convention and its States Parties. Consequently, it is incumbent on the States Parties at the annual meetings to ensure that a **comprehensive** and

integrated approach is adopted in promoting common understandings and effective action.

It needs to be recognized that the mandate for the current Intersessional Process is **different** from that which applied to the previous Intersessional Processes when, in 2007 to 2010, six different topics were considered: two in 2007, two in 2008 and one in 2009 and one in 2010. In those years, it was necessary to consider the topics initially at the Meeting of Experts and then to address the *common understandings and effective action* at the annual Meeting of States Parties. In **this** Intersessional Process, there are three Standing Agenda items to be discussed in each of the four years and two biennial topics, each to be considered for two years. Care needs to be taken to avoid misinterpreting of the mandate as being simply to discuss each year and to avoid addressing how best to *promote common understanding and effective action* until the final year in 2015 before the next Review Conference. This applies equally to the biennial topics – actual progress and decisions reached should be reported at the end of the first year as well as at the end of the second year.

Mr. Chairman

In addressing the three Standing Agenda items, it is important **each year** to consider **all** the topics set out by the Seventh Review Conference for each Standing Agenda item. The importance of doing this is especially evident when it is recognized that in some areas such as a recent development in science and technology such as the implications of the H5N1 avian influenza issue, it would be illogical not to address all the topics set out for the Standing Agenda item. And these likewise all need to be addressed when considering the annual *topical scientific subject*.

A particular advantage of the new approach set out by the Seventh Review Conference for this Intersessional Process is **the cross fertilization** between the elements of the three Standing Agenda items. For example, the Standing Agenda item on science and technology includes the sub-item:

8. Education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology

which is closely related to the sub-item of the Standing Agenda item on national implementation which reads:

2. A range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, especially Articles III and IV

Another example relates to the Standing Agenda item on cooperation and assistance which has a sub-item:

4. Capacity-building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity, and for detecting, reporting, and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation

which is closely related to the sub-item of the Standing Agenda item on national implementation which reads:

(d) national, regional and international measures to improve laboratory biosafety and security of pathogens and toxins;

Mr. Chairman

The challenge for the States Parties at this Meeting of States Parties is to adopt an **integrated** and **comprehensive** approach which recognizes and builds upon the **cross-fertilization** between the **three** Standing Agenda items and sets out the corresponding *common understandings and effective action* in the report of this Meeting.

And, in looking forward to next year, we would urge the Chairman in his letters to the States Parties to encourage them and any other participants – whether an international organization or a guest of the meeting – to address the question of how best *to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action* in regard to the particular topic of the Agenda that they are addressing and to set out **explicitly** what they recommend that the States Parties should do. Such a step would help to ensure that all submitted recommendations and proposals are captured in Annex I.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, we note that you will be reporting on progress towards universalization of the Convention. As this is the 40th year since the Convention was opened for signature, we are hoping that you have mounted an especial effort to encourage those States which are already party to the Chemical Weapons Convention – that currently has 188 States Parties – to become States Parties to the BTWC – that currently has 165 States Parties. And should such an effort not have been possible in 2012, then we urge that States Parties should agree in their report to mount such a special concerted effort in conjunction with the co-Depositaries in 2013.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.