

## Chairman's Opening Remarks

At the Meeting of Experts in August, we had an impressively productive exchange of a vast amount of information relating to States Parties' efforts and views on national implementation and on security and oversight of pathogens. States Parties provided a wealth of information on their own national experiences, some in extensive technical detail, and also on developments and challenges that would in their view need to be addressed, and how these might be approached.

I know from my own discussions that many delegations found the Meeting of Experts to be a very useful exercise simply for the information shared. Experts in various aspects of national implementation and biosecurity were able to return home with fresh ideas for taking their national efforts forward, and with new contacts with colleagues to continue developing ideas and solving problems. The report of the Meeting of Experts, along with the working papers and the CD-ROM Information Repository, constitutes a handy resource for national implementation, whatever the individual circumstances of a States Party. In this sense, our new process established by the Fifth Review Conference has already been a success.

But I think it is important that we do not let it rest at that, and that we make every effort to use this Meeting of States Parties to take a further qualitative step forward. As I mentioned in my closing remarks to the Meeting of Experts, a number of common themes emerged during that meeting. National presentations from different States Parties, with different sizes, legal systems, levels of resources and political outlook, often focused on these same common themes. While it was widely recognised that there is no "one size fits all" solution to national implementation, it is nevertheless apparent, on examining the material contributed by States Parties, that there are common elements that can be derived and applied usefully in a wide range of situations, and adapted to fit as necessary.

I hope all delegations have had a chance to look at the report of the Meeting of Experts and at the working papers, and to consider and analyse the common themes. I would like to mention again the CD-ROM Information Repository in this context. As demonstrated earlier, it is possible to use the search functions on the CD-ROM to find proposals and ideas put forward by States Parties at the Meeting of Experts, grouped by theme. My hope is that in the course of this week, delegations which have made proposals will be able to talk more about them, and link and compare them to the often very similar proposals made by others.

In talking more about their proposals and ideas, I encourage delegations to move their focus from their own national experience and instead look at the themes and elements, principles and lessons that might apply more generally, both to States Parties with similar situations and needs, and to those whose circumstances are different. This could be described as an exercise in abstraction, but I do not want to give the impression that we are trying to turn specific, practical proposals into vague generalities. Rather, we should be trying to extract those parts of specific proposals that are of interest to more than one particular State Party, and then seeking to assemble them into some kind of coherent, logical order.

This is what I mean about taking a step further than the Meeting of Experts. The result of that meeting was an extensive collation of material, much of it valuable and useful, but put together in no particular order. There are many repetitions, and essentially similar proposals and observations are made in widely different ways in different places. It is not an easy task for anyone to sort through these and draw out the elements that might be most relevant for a

particular State Party's national implementation requirements. So if we can, as a result of this meeting, achieve some sort of distillation of this material, a refinement of the common themes and elements, I think we will have an excellent outcome.

As I have said in my informal consultations with the regional groups and with individual delegations, I do not wish to try to dictate the actual form of the outcome of this Meeting of States Parties. We will need some kind of final document that accurately reflects our work, and I hope you will agree that we should produce something that will be of lasting practical value to individual States Parties. But the actual format of the outcome will have to be something that develops naturally in the course of our work this week. We do not have time for any drafting work, or lengthy negotiations on form and format, so we will have to take a pragmatic attitude, and put the wealth of material we have into a coherent and usable form in the best way we can.

As we begin the general debate and discussion, I would also like to remind States Parties of the important dimension of our work of considering possibilities of the exchange of legal and technical assistance for national implementation and biosecurity efforts. I hope that in their contributions to the general debate, States Parties in a position to do so will take the opportunity to offer to other States Parties legal and technical assistance for improving national implementation and security and oversight of pathogens and toxins. A number of such offers were foreshadowed during the Meeting of Experts, and I encourage delegations to outline what they may be able to offer in this regard.

From tomorrow, having concluded the general debate we will move into more specific consideration of our two topics, in accordance with the programme of work. I will have more to say at that stage about some of the common themes which we might examine, and again I strongly encourage delegations to be ready to talk about and develop the proposals and ideas they put forward at the Meeting of Experts.

Finally, may I conclude by reiterating my regular plea at the Meeting of Experts for delegations to provide their statements and contributions in writing to the Secretariat, and if possible in electronic format. I intend to continue with the practice established at the Meeting of Experts of issuing a daily collation of all contributions, so I ask you to assist the Secretariat in its task by providing your material in writing as promptly as possible.

With that, I would like to begin the general debate and discussion. I have a number of speakers who have already requested the floor this morning, but of course delegations are free to request the floor in the normal way.