

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
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STATEMENT

by

H. E. Mr. NUGROHO WISNUMURTI  
Head of Delegation of the Republic of Indonesia

to the

Fifth Review Conference  
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

Geneva, 20th November 2001

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Mr President,

Please allow me first of all to convey to you my delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of this Fifth Review Conference. I am confident that with the benefit of your diplomatic skills and your vast experience in the field of disarmament, including the true dedication and leadership that you have shown throughout your tenure as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group for the past six years, you will guide us effectively in our work and enable us to reach the consensus which the present troubled times urgently require. To this end, let me assure you of my delegation's continued support and cooperation in leading our deliberations to a successful outcome.

I would also like to extend through you, Mr President, my delegation's congratulations to Mr Enrique Roman-Morey on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference. I am equally convinced that his expertise in the field of disarmament will also contribute to the success of our deliberations.

Mr. President,

Indonesia attaches great importance to the use of bio-technology as a means of advancing human welfare. With this in mind and as a State Party which has ratified the Convention, Indonesia has been involved in the process of improving its infrastructure for the implementation of the Convention, based on the premise that the full implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention by all states will significantly contribute to the realization of the objectives of general and complete disarmament, thus preserving international peace and security.

As a State Party to the Convention, Indonesia has faithfully adhered to its provisions and actively supported and participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Group as mandated by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention in 1994 with a view to negotiating and producing a legally binding instrument to strengthen the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention.

It is a source of deep concern to my delegation that the Ad Hoc Group at its last meeting failed to complete negotiations on a verification protocol before this Fifth Review Conference. My delegation feels that this unfortunately creates uncertainties over the future of the Group itself, as well as over the protocol and the entire negotiating process, not to mention the compliance provisions drawn up by the Convention. It is incumbent upon all of us who share the same determination to achieve the objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention to continue negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group in order to finally reach the necessary consensus on the protocol. In this connection, Indonesia supports the composite text presented by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group as a basis for negotiation.

The terrorist attacks of the 11th of September against the United States and the recent use of biological agents as a means of terror have taken the appalling threat of bacteriological warfare out of the realm of the abstract and into everyday reality. Indeed, we are now faced with the need to react rapidly in the face of a danger of potentially global proportions with dire psychological as well as pathological consequences. Consequently, we more than ever have to put every effort into achieving the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of biological weapons and their elimination. Thus, the Convention is essential to the preservation of world peace and security.

My delegation believes that the absence of a workable verification regime weakens the Convention by making it ineffective and hence represents an incitement for either under-motivated or ill-intentioned States parties to breach their obligations. Indeed, it is regrettable that, in the face of the very real threat of a biological attack, this pivotal issue remains unresolved. In this regard, my delegation is of the view that confidence-building and transparency measures, provided they are carried out in a non-discriminatory manner, are still the best path forward.

I would like to point out some areas which my delegation believes needs to be taken into consideration in the endeavor to produce a sound verification regime which is cost-effective, reliable and least intrusive. Firstly, it should not hamper the use, research and development of biological/toxin agents for peaceful purposes, particularly in addressing the disease which normally occur in the tropical countries, such as my own. In this regard, according to Article X of the Convention, the States Parties undertake to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes. This is one of the basic provisions of the Convention and, like all others, need to be fully implemented.

Secondly, a verification system should be credible, therefore it should eliminate any possibility of disclosing commercial proprietary information liable to damage the interests of the national industries of the States Parties.

Thirdly, it seems important to us that the regime does not hamper technical cooperation among the States Parties or create barriers to accessing advanced technology, but that it should instead promote international cooperation in the development of bio-technology for peaceful purposes. In this regard my delegation should like to stress our belief that technical and scientific cooperation is important not only for the socio-economic development of the developing countries, but also fighting for infectious diseases and effectively combat the current threat of bio-terrorism.

Mr President,

A further meaningful point which we must consider in this Review Conference is the preservation of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, in order that the latter may set to work on drawing up the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. In my delegation's view, this protocol should continue to be negotiated multilaterally, like other existing multilateral disarmament treaties, in order to achieve a broader-based consensus. In this context, my delegation believes that it is equally important that the term "multilateral" should be understood in the fullest sense, thus avoiding narrow interpretations of the concept, which may be distorted to mean something more limited in scope and which would serve the purposes of only a few. In our view, there is no alternative to multilateralism, especially when it comes to combating the risks represented by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and of biological weapons in particular.

To conclude, Mr President, in order to reassure the international community in the present state of the world, this Review Conference needs to send a clear and positive  
^ signal to indicate our commitment to strengthening multilateral disarmament and the non-  
" proliferation regime.

Thank you, Mr President.