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**Closing Remarks of
Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan,
President of the Sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention
Geneva; 8 December, 2006**

We have succeeded. I think we can say, without any exaggeration, that this is an historic moment, both for the Biological Weapons Convention and for multilateral security and disarmament. Over the past months, as we worked to prepare for this Conference, I spoke often of the need to transcend the past. We have done this. At times over the past three weeks, the shadow of the past has stalked us, but we have been nimble-footed, and we have quickly moved into the brighter lights of the future.

In his address to us at our opening session, the Secretary-General of the United Nations said that the Convention was too important to be abandoned to political paralysis. We have demonstrated the truth of this. The Convention is more important than ever. One hundred and three States Parties participated in the Conference. This is more than in any previous conference, and two-thirds of the total membership of the Convention. The Convention is clearly important to these States Parties, as it is to the record number of 33 non-governmental organizations who attended. We have had a full schedule of lunchtime seminars, including valuable contributions from the international scientific community. The interest and engagement of civil society has never been greater in what must be a shared struggle against the threat of biological weapons.

This shared vision, this broad acceptance of the importance of our task – in spite of our differences – has been evident in the extraordinarily collegiate and constructive atmosphere we have enjoyed over the past three weeks. All delegations have contributed in a positive spirit of flexibility and mutual respect. The dialogue and negotiations have been extremely civil and courteous. Where differences and disagreements have been expressed, they have been expressed thoughtfully, with restraint, and with a view to resolving rather than exacerbating problems. This has made an enormous contribution to our work, and I thank you all.

I said that this Conference has achieved an historic outcome. To prove that this is not just the President's closing homily, let us look at exactly what we have achieved. We have been fixated over the past two days on a handful of contentious items, and I was reminded yesterday of the saying that one cannot see the forest for the trees. Now we have finished with those trees, let's look at the whole forest, because it is quite impressive.

After a gap of ten years, we have thoroughly and comprehensively reviewed all articles of the Convention, and agreed on a declaration setting out our shared vision of the Convention and its implementation. This in itself is a strong message to the

international community that the Convention is alive and well, and remains effective as the fundamental legal norm against biological weapons.

We have unequivocally reaffirmed that the Convention applies to all relevant scientific and technological developments, and effectively prohibits the *use* of biological weapons.

We have emphasized the need for effective national implementation of the Convention, and for measures to promote the development of the peaceful uses of biological agents and toxins.

We have adopted a specific and detailed plan to promote universal adherence to the Convention.

We have streamlined and updated the procedures for the submission and distribution of the Confidence-building Measures, and taken practical steps to increase the level of participation.

We have adopted a full and comprehensive intersessional programme for 2007 to 2010, where we will address the important topics of national implementation, regional cooperation, biosafety and biosecurity, oversight and awareness-raising, enhancement of international cooperation and exchange in biological science and technology, and assistance in the case of alleged use of biological weapons.

And perhaps most historically of all, we have agreed to establish an Implementation Support Unit to assist us in implementing the decisions of this Conference. For many years, the States Parties have debated the need for institutional support for the Convention. Now we have it, built not on a political argument, nor on a perception that “something is better than nothing”, but on the solid basis of the positive and practical contribution the temporary secretariat has made over the past three years. We know we will be getting a professional, efficient and dedicated unit that will make a significant contribution to our important work over the next four years.

That is a short resume of what we have achieved. It is short because it is concrete and substantive.

Let me go back now to look at the tasks we set ourselves earlier this year, or at least at the tasks I set you.

I said, “...we should build on the success of the convention, find ways to overcome problems and convert divergences into convergences.” We have done this.

I said, “There is a strong possibility of bringing the international community to one platform. This event could represent a peak in disarmament diplomacy.” This has come true.

I said, “The Sixth Review Conference will be able to make a genuine and lasting contribution to keeping the world free of biological weapons.” We have done this, provided we work hard over the next five years.

I said, “The Sixth Review Conference will be a crucial opportunity for the international community to step up efforts against the threats posed by biological and toxin weapons, and to ensure that the great strides being made in biological science and technology are used only for the benefit of people around the world.” We have seized this crucial opportunity, and we have indeed stepped up our efforts.

I urged you to “banish failure”, as the word can be self-indoctrinating and self-debilitating. Rather, I suggested, “we will put success on the table and try to define what it could be.” We have certainly banished failure, and we have defined success and put it on the table for the world to see.

As the Secretary-General said to us on 20 November, “this is multilateralism as it should be: flexible, responsive, creative and dynamic; and above all, focused on overcoming obstacles and delivering results.” I think we have achieved a result which will meet the Secretary-General’s expectations. On behalf of all States Parties, I promised him that we would deliver a strong and positive outcome that would be a fitting legacy to his vision and determination in the field of disarmament. I think that, together, we have done this.

The documents that we have are not an empty, cosmetic consensus. They are a win-win result for all

Let me thank all delegations for their role in this success. It has been a truly collective effort, and a demonstration of multilateralism at its best. Thank you.

I would also like to thank all those who have worked so hard to prepare for and support our conference. Some of them you see, here on the podium and in the conference room; many more work behind the scenes. I thank them all for their vital contribution.

That concludes our business here. I am sure you are all eager to go and write your reports, and to celebrate and relax. It is the end of the year, it is time to unwind. We will meet again in 2007, and we have a lot of important work before us. I know I can count on your cooperation and support, and I look forward to seeing you refreshed, energetic and ready to work in the New Year.

I thank you all.
