
News & Media

SEVENTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION CONTINUES GENERAL DEBATE

5 December 2011

The Seventh Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction this afternoon continued its general debate.

In the general debate some States said that the possibility of biological weapons falling into the hands of terrorists was a serious concern for humanity, and could happen as a consequence of the spread of easy-to-obtain dual-use goods and technology used to produce biological weapons. Many States agreed they should set a goal to create a legally-binding instrument to strengthen and improve the implementation of the Convention. States highlighted the importance of the inter-sessional process and said the Review Conference had to take bold and realistic steps. States Parties including Serbia spoke about the withdrawal of their reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Many agreed that the 1925 Geneva Protocol was key to international security, and States that had not yet ratified it were strongly encouraged to do so.

The Convention could only become universal when all States Parties had ratified it, many speakers emphasized. Another challenge was to ensure that all States fulfilled their commitments under the Convention: several speakers said that a short term measure would be the use of Confidence Building Mechanisms, while a protocol of verification would be important for the long-term. States Parties were reminded that an essential obligation of the Treaty was to submit annual reports. States confirmed their commitment to working together to strengthen the Confidence Building Mechanism. Ensuring that the Biological Weapons Convention was always up-to-date with new technological developments, so that it could effectively contribute to the challenge of reducing the threat from biological weapons, should be an essential focus of the Conference. Detection, preparation and response were areas that needed to be improved, although several States welcomed the work of the World Health Organization on those important topics.

The following States took the floor: Turkey, Serbia, Spain, Russia, Bulgaria, Canada, Switzerland, South Africa, Norway, Mexico, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Romania, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Philippines, Denmark, Brazil and Peru.

The Biological Weapons Convention, more formally referred to as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, opened for signature in 1972 and entered into force in 1975. The Biological Weapons Convention prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, retention, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons and is a key element – along with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention – in the international community's efforts to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Biological Weapons Convention is the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons. It currently has 165 States parties, with a further 12 having signed but not yet ratified it.

The meeting of the Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference will resume at 10 p.m. on Tuesday, 6 December to continue the general debate.

General Debate

OGUZ DEMIRALP ([Turkey](#)) said the spread and transfer of dual-use goods and technology that could be used to produce biological weapons and the possibility of them falling into the hands of terrorists was a major concern for humanity. Coupled with weapons of mass destruction, the fact that those agents were so easy to attain had made the concerns all the more significant. Turkey had increased activities in this domain, namely legislative work, academic curriculum, awareness-raising, improvement of analysis-laboratory capacities, scientific research and acquisition of new equipment. The law on National Bio-safety was approved by the Turkish Parliament in March 2010 with the aim of protecting the environment and biological diversity to achieve sustainability and conservation of human health as well as the flora and fauna, in the context of national requirements and in light of technological and scientific developments. Turkey was looking forward to positive outcomes in the Seventh Review Conference in the areas of universalization, intersessional processes, advances in science and technology, compliance and verification, the continuation and strengthening of the Implementation Support Unit and cooperation and assistance.

The geographical position of Turkey had made the issue of universality an important consideration. The Review Conference should take into account any new scientific and technological development relevant to the Convention. Awareness of the innovations in the life sciences as well as their implications for the Convention would be necessary to address the complex challenges in this area. The language and spirit of article X provided a solid basis for international cooperation. Enhanced implementation of article X would not only contribute to the development of capacities to prevent and contain epidemics but also help build confidence. Turkey attached importance to the issue of international cooperation in the cases of outbreaks of diseases emanating from natural causes as well as accidental or deliberate release. The Convention lacked a verification regime, which for Turkey was a useful mechanism like that in the Chemical Weapons Convention. A similar mechanism in the Biological Weapons Convention would strengthen the Convention's effectiveness.

BRANKA LATINOVIĆ ([Serbia](#)) thanked the President of the Review Conference for taking part in the First Regional Workshop for South-East Europe on the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, held in Belgrade on 1 and 2 November 2011. The representatives of the following States took part in the workshop: Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia. Participants also included a number of prominent experts from international organizations, institutes and universities. Particular attention was given to issues on strengthening of national capacities for the elaboration of laws and regulations to implement the Biological Weapons Convention, supporting the Biological Weapons Convention through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, and the role and assistance of Implementation Support Unit.

The Biological Weapons Convention was one of the cornerstones of multilateral efforts to fight the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Serbia gave its full support to the Biological Weapons Convention process to ensure its full and effective implementation on the national and regional level as well as for its universality as one of the important pillars of global security premises. Since the last Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference, Serbia had demonstrated its readiness for further improvements of its capacities concerning the various aspects of the Biological Weapons Convention at the national level through the adoption of laws and regulations in this regard. The Parliament of Serbia adopted on 29 May 2009 the Law on the withdrawal of the reservation to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Serbia had also improved its scope of activities in other areas of non-proliferation.

JAVIER GIL CATALINA ([Spain](#)) said that transparency and mutual confidence between States parties was essential for an effective Biological Weapons Convention. The Convention was critical in building an effective non-proliferation regime and for the application of applied sciences to improving health and education. Further exploration of ways to strengthen Confidence Building Measures were necessary as these measures provided a basis for transparency. An effective verification mechanism

for the Convention was critical and Spain hoped there would be sufficient political will to move this mechanism forward. International cooperation and synergies in terms of the prevention of diseases and bio-security were necessary to improve safety at both the international and national levels. Spain commended the work of the Implementation Support Unit, whose efforts had strengthened the capacity of States parties.

Universalization of the Convention should incorporate the ratification of States parties that had not yet done so. The main challenge of the Convention was to ensure the fulfillment of States parties' commitments and Spain noted the importance of a protocol of verification in the long term and the use of Confidence Building Mechanisms in the short term. It was important to develop new avenues to improve the quality provision while not burdening States parties further. The risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction required tools for a global response, notably in the case of biological weapons used by one State against another or by terrorists. The Convention should be a living one and it was necessary that throughout the process the role of international organizations should be kept in mind with opportunities to create productive and efficient synergies between them and States parties.

GENNADIY GATILOV ([Russia](#)) said that this forum was to become one of this year's most significant events in the field of multilateral disarmament. The Biological Weapons Convention was one of the key instruments of international security and global stability. Almost four decades had passed since the Convention was signed, but the Biological Weapons Regime was still relevant. Russia had enacted effective laws that ensured that any attempts to violate the Convention were prevented, revealed and suppressed. The Criminal Code in Russia provided for serious sanctions in case of such violations. Russia promoted international cooperation in the field of peaceful biology.

International efforts needed to be focused on three areas, namely, first, the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention. It was the main prerequisite for global biological security. Russia welcomed the States that joined the Convention during the last five years. However, 30 countries still remained outside the Convention. Some of them were located in areas of regional instability, and this further aggravated the situation; it was an extremely dangerous situation. The 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare was the only instrument that directly prohibited the use of biological weapons. It was of concern that some States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention still maintained reservations to the Geneva Protocol.

The second point was the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention. The viability of any international treaty in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation was based on national implementation of all commitments under the treaty. The Biological Weapons Convention was no exception. The third point was effective international control and verification. The possibility to verify was a guarantee that the provisions of the Convention were not violated and the regime of prohibition of biological and toxin weapons was functioning. Also, Russia attached great importance to confidence-building within the Biological Weapons Convention. Unfortunately, more than half of the States parties to the Convention still failed to comply with their obligation to annually submit information on their biological facilities and activities.

GANCHO GANEV ([Bulgaria](#)) said that Bulgaria had a sound record of upholding unconditionally the principles and objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention, and supporting the strengthening of its regime. Bulgaria was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Biological Weapons Convention, contributing to the entry into force of the first international instrument banning a whole category of weapons of mass destruction, which laid the cornerstone of international efforts to prohibit biological and toxin weapons. Bulgaria had withdrawn reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and redoubled efforts to improve its legislation and enforcement framework, bringing it in line with the acquis of the European Union and in full compliance with its obligations, stemming from the Biological Weapons Convention and other international instruments, in particular relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. The Biological Weapons Convention, which entered into force in 1975, was more relevant than ever as an instrument of collective security in a rapidly changing environment. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remained one of the greatest threats

to international peace and security. Possible malicious use of the breakthroughs witnessed in life sciences and biotechnologies and related risk of unacceptable development or use of biological and toxin weapons by States and non-state actors was a main challenge that required joint unequivocal response through strengthening the prohibitive dimension of the Biological Weapons Convention and the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Bulgaria believed that confidence in compliance could be enhanced by means of information exchange and greater transparency through declarations, consultations and on-site activities, including making better use of the intersessional process for exchanges and review and of tools like the Implementation Support Unit. Bulgaria upheld the concrete implementation of Article X, elaboration of common understandings for enhancing cooperation for peaceful purposes in the Biological Weapons Convention framework.

ELISSA GOLBERG (Canada), speaking in joint statement for Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand, said that the risk of biological weapons proliferation remained as real today as when the Convention was negotiated. While there was recognition of the potential benefits resulting from the recent rapid advances in science and technology, there was also potential for misuse. Since the Sixth Review Conference, States parties had had productive discussions and done significant work on the challenges related to the Biological Weapons Convention, including on implementation nationally and regionally, improvements in bio-safety and bio-security, capacity building in disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment, international cooperation, and provision of assistance in cases of alleged use of biological weapons. Confidence Building Measures remained an essential instrument of transparency under the Convention and could be improved through an increase in participation, a refinement of the content of the measures and an improvement in the submission process. The Seventh Review Conference presented a good opportunity to improve international cooperation and coordination under article X. Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand had undertaken a wide range of international cooperation activities over the past five years, including building capacity in disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, containment, and treatment, as well as bio-safety, bio-security, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear response training through various mechanisms including the Global Partnership Programme. The Implementation Support Unit should be available to States parties to help facilitate their international collaboration in addition to other proposals on strengthening the implementation of article X.

Owing to the rapid pace of advancement in biological sciences, an annual review of developments in science and technology should replace the clearly insufficient five year review provided for in article XII. This Review Conference should address the issues of compliance and implementation, including enhancing the assurance of States parties' compliance with the Convention. The last two intersessional processes were useful in promoting the implementation of the Convention as the meetings provided for a thorough exchange of views and practices in numerous technical fields. The establishment of the Implementation Support Unit was one of the success stories of the Sixth Review Conference as it had contributed in an outstanding manner to the implementation of the norms of this Convention and had provided many States parties with efficient and practical support. Universality of the Biological Weapons Convention remained a continuing challenge and further and more systematic work was needed to increase membership in the Convention.

ALEXANDRE FASEL (Switzerland) said that over the last four years States parties had worked together in a collegiate manner to improve the Biological Weapons Convention and enhance cooperation. A strike by biological weapons would cause significant turmoil and these weapons, unlike nuclear weapons, had been completely delegitimized. Despite this solid stance towards biological weapons which was anchored in the Convention, these weapons still posed a threat to the world. A priority of the Review Conference should be the universalization of the Convention. Switzerland attached great importance to the implementation of article X and stressed that States which needed assistance should receive the necessary support. Confidence Building Measures remained the only tool in the Convention for transparency among States parties. Despite its shortcomings, participation in Confidence Building Measures should be mandatory and Switzerland was disappointed that participation was so low. Switzerland with other countries had proposed pragmatic changes to

increase participation and encouraged States parties to consider new ways of using the information contained in the Confidence Building Measures.

It was vital that the Convention should not lose touch with the rapid developments of biological sciences and Switzerland was in favour of setting up an effective and flexible mechanism to ensure a regular and systematic review of scientific and technological developments. The risk of wrongful use of biotechnology was an area of concern and there should be awareness-raising among biologists of the double use and potential abuse of biotechnology. It was necessary to sensitize biologists to the potential of research being misused. Switzerland strongly promoted the strengthening of the Implementation Support Unit's mandate as it had clearly proven its merit in assisting States parties in implementing the Convention. A measured enhancement of the Implementation Support Unit's range of activities was a desirable and realistic goal.

ABDUL SAMAD MINTY ([South Africa](#)) said that the threat of biological weapons remained a concern for South Africa. One could not underestimate the ease with which these weapons could be acquired and manufactured. To this end, South Africa was dedicated to the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention, and maintained its support for efforts to the realization of a strong, effective and universally accepted Convention. South Africa shared the view that a legally binding instrument was necessary to strengthen the Convention and improve its implementation, and that such an instrument should remain a goal. However, South Africa did not agree that the only route to obtain such a goal was through full time negotiations. South Africa was also open to other means of strengthening the Convention.

One of the most important issues to be considered during the Review Conference was the question of the intersessional process. This intersessional period was crucial for the future strengthening of the Convention; therefore this Review Conference would have to take some bold, but realistic steps. During the Sixth Review Conference, South Africa had submitted a Working Paper in which a more substantive process was proposed, but which unfortunately did not find consensus. The time had come for this Review Conference to establish a structured system of meetings with different levels of decision making. South Africa had thus submitted a Working Paper with detailed proposals for an intersessional process that built upon the positive elements of the process followed during the last ten years, but that endeavoured to strengthen it in a progressive and sustainable manner. On the issue of Article X of the Convention, South Africa believed that it was vital that States should focus on the developmental and co-operation features of the Convention. South Africa shared the view that Article X should promote the right of States parties to participate in the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific information for peaceful purposes. South Africa also believed that the implementation of Article X should not hamper economic and technological development of the peaceful uses of biological agents.

STEFFEN KONGSTAD ([Norway](#)) said that the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention was a keystone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The Convention had furthered multilateral arms control diplomacy, as shown in 2006 when the States parties agreed on a pragmatic intersessional work programme focusing on selected topics. Biotechnology was a rapidly evolving science and there should be an ambitious and forward looking approach to it which would help the international community to deal with the growing risk of the hostile use of biological materials due to technological development. There was a need to agree upon a new intersessional programme that would allow States parties to address both existing and emerging challenges in the coming years. Greater efforts should be made to universalize the Convention and the upcoming conference in Finland on establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would encourage more countries in the region to join the Convention. Confidence Building Measures should be refined and utilized to better reflect current needs. There was a need to take a closer look at how the Convention could keep pace with the rapid developments in science and technology by strengthening the practical collaboration between the scientific and disarmament communities.

Health remained a key priority for Norwegian development cooperation and Norway underlined the importance of the full implementation of article X. At the same time there should be recognition of the efforts in promoting international cooperation and assistance in human, animal and plant health which

were carried out by other institutions such as the World Health Organization. Article X should be used to facilitate and promote further international cooperation in life sciences and Norway was ready to consider a mechanism which would enable more to be done on article X. Norway stressed the importance of maintaining a strong Implementation Support Unit for the Convention as it had proved to be a valuable tool for implementing the Convention. The Convention should continue to enhance its partnerships with relevant international agencies and civil society actors because advancement in the field of disarmament and arms control could only be achieved if States listened to and learned from and included strong voices from civil society.

JUAN JOSE GOMEZ CAMACHO ([Mexico](#)) reiterated Mexico's commitment to the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention. Universalization of the Convention would strengthen the regime. Progress of science and technology in our time had increased access to products that until recently were only in the hands of a few. Thus the Convention had to be strengthened and new approaches had to be explored. It was a multidimensional issue and Mexico regretted the lack of binding legal provisions in the Convention and verification mechanisms. The intersessional period had been very fruitful and expert meetings were very useful as well; these meetings should continue. Mexico was very open to looking at proposals to strengthen the Implementation Support Unit working on the implementation of the Convention.

Detection, preparation and response were areas that needed to be better known and dealt with. Notification and Response were tasks that the World Health Organization was working on; and there had been a workshop on the issue. Training was provided on early detection. International health regulation was crucial and Mexico had realized this during the H1N1 epidemics in 2009. Thus, regional and multilateral cooperation was crucial in the preparation and prevention of crises and exchange of information as well as transparency were key instruments of this.

MARI AMANO ([Japan](#)) said that with the rapid advances in science and technology, there was a need to prepare for the potentially heightened risks associated with biotechnology and biological agents with regards to their illicit use or misuse. Life scientists had played a crucial role in the Convention and as such it was indispensable for its implementation to focus on education and awareness-raising for scientists. The work of the Implementation Support Unit to assist the States parties was highly appreciated and had contributed significantly to the universalization and operation of the Convention. For national implementation it was important for each country to introduce domestic legislation and establish a system in order to safely control high risk pathogens. However, the over regulation of scientific research could hinder innovation of science and technology and must be avoided.

Japan recognized that due to the progress in life sciences, it had become necessary to review annually developments relevant to the Convention. The creation of three open-ended working groups, each covering one subject within the meeting of experts would allow for the continual discussion of important issues such as confidence building, international cooperation and assistance, and the review of science and technology. Japan regarded Confidence Building Measures as important for promoting transparency and had made confidence building submissions every year since their introduction. Japan was considering further enhancing transparency by not only providing information to the Convention's States parties but also to make it available to the public. The international community now stood at a critical juncture concerning what next steps should be taken over the following five years to enhance the Convention and therefore the Seventh Review Conference must bear the great responsibility of paving the way forward for addressing the challenges ahead.

PETER WOOLCOTT ([Australia](#)) said that during the last intersessional period, States parties had continued to collaborate on advancing effective national implementation on a practical level, with strong support from the Implementation Support Unit. There had also been much valuable direct collaboration on health-security capacity-building. As an example, Australia had been working with partners in their region to help build capacity in disease surveillance systems. In one such programme, Australia was working with partners to build animal health institutions to increase capacity to recognize new diseases emerging in animals which may also infect humans. The health and security benefits of such collaborations were clear.

However, the Convention continued to face challenges. Thirty one States still remained outside of the Convention. Also, were the States parties keeping up with the advances in biotechnology in their implementation of the Convention? Many States parties had identified a common set of issues requiring action. This Review Conference should refine the intersessional process so that it provided for greater flexibility and continuity in the way in which States parties addressed important implementation-related issues. This Conference should also assist in focusing States parties' international cooperation and assistance efforts through the establishment of an open-ended intersessional working group on science and technology and on education and awareness-raising within the scientific community. Moreover, the Conference should renew the Implementation Support Unit in a manner which preserved and consolidated its efficient, effective and professional operations in support of States parties.

DELL HIGGIE ([New Zealand](#)) said that there could be no doubt that the Biological Weapons Convention remained an integral part of the disarmament and non-proliferation fabric and an indispensable tool in global efforts to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction. In the absence of a formal compliance regime, the confidence building measures mechanisms had become an important tool to promote the implementation of the Convention and to share experiences and best practices in this regard. The fast moving pace of developments in the life sciences had presented a unique challenge for the Convention. It was important that there was a robust system in place to ensure that the Convention remained relevant in the light of contemporary scientific and technological developments.

Assistance and cooperation as envisaged in article X of the Convention were key elements in the full realization of the Convention's objectives. New Zealand had been involved in this review period in a wide range of international cooperation activities covering issues such as pandemic planning, emergency preparedness and response, disease surveillance, bio-safety and bio-security. The good work that had been undertaken in the past intersessional process had demonstrated the value of regular, targeted meetings to ensure the good health and on-going relevance of the Convention and its implementation. There was potential for the intersessional process to better serve implementation of the Convention and New Zealand would see merit in a targeted intersessional approach, perhaps adopting a working group or standing committee mechanisms to take forward the Convention's objectives ensuring they remained up to date with current developments. New Zealand supported a measured enhancement of the Implementation Support Unit to ensure that it could undertake the activities mandated by States parties in a full and effective manner.

MARIA CIOBANU ([Romania](#)) said that it went without saying that the Biological Weapons Conference was one of the cornerstones of disarmament and non-proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction. There was no alternative to this regime, but it was the one most in need of being strengthened, in order to prevent the misuse of science for purposes prohibited by the Convention. Terrorism, globalization and the rapid developments in bio-science posed new challenges to all States and rendered the Biological Weapons Convention particularly topical. The Seventh Review Conference was an important and timely opportunity to revisit the Convention, after the last complete review in 2006. Romania strongly supported further strengthening the universality of the Biological Weapons Convention. But the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention was not sufficient without an improvement of the process of its implementation on regional and national levels.

Romania encouraged all States parties to submit annual reports, as an essential obligation of the treaty. Romania was committed to working with other States Parties on measures of strengthening the Confidence Building Mechanism. States must continue to develop preventive measures such as codes of conduct for those involved in the life sciences. States parties should continue in-depth discussions about the latest developments in science and technology that could affect the Biological Weapons Convention. It was essential to build on what had been achieved during the current intersessional period. Last but not least, the role of the Implementation Support Unit, established in 2006, had been seen as very positive.

DIAN TRIANSYAH DJANI ([Indonesia](#)) said that Indonesia reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to this Convention which was considered to be one of the most important international conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation. All States parties should work together to achieve general and

complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The Review Conference conducted once every five years as mandated by the Convention provided a platform for States parties to review the operation of the Convention in light of the development of science and technology throughout time. Indonesia underscored the paramount importance of international cooperation, assistance and partnership and perceived the merit in establishing a framework for cooperation in order to narrow the gap among States parties pertaining to their resources, development and national capacity.

There was a need for a compliance and verification mechanism to ensure and verify States parties' adherence to the Convention. Continuous discussions on the topic in the intercessional process were pertinent in order to forge a common understanding. However such a mechanism should not be confused with Confidence Building Measures which served as a tool to provide transparency and build trust among States parties in the implementation of the Convention. As an island country which was prone to emerging infectious diseases mainly caused by varied environmental, ecological and demographic factors spread through people's movement, Indonesia reiterated the need for strengthening not only national but also regional and international capacity to respond to the alleged use of biological weapons and in disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and preparedness as well as in public health systems, including science and technology transfer.

NORMAN LIZANO ([Costa Rica](#)) highlighted the topic of universality and welcomed the new members. Also, Costa Rica was glad to see that most countries in its region, Latin America and the Caribbean, had understood the necessity to adhere to the Biological Weapons Convention. Despite the limited resources, there had been positive results in the past few years thanks to the Implementation Support Unit. Costa Rica would like to see this Unit strengthened and hoped that this Conference would manage to reach that result. About science and technology, Articles VII and X really needed to be respected and implemented; exchanging experience was crucial along with the transfer of technology and education about the issue. Costa Rica had had contacts with countries in its region and a workshop had been organized in Lima on these issues.

JESUS DOMINGO ([Philippines](#)) said the Philippines wished to express its appreciation for the progress made since the Sixth Review Conference, including the useful and constructive intersessional process, the activation of the Implementation Support Unit, advances in biological science and technology, developments in universalization and national implementation, and regional and bilateral cooperation. Nevertheless, a number of challenges remained.

The Philippines highlighted the positive developments in advancing biological science, safety and security cooperation in the Asia Pacific region. The East Asia-Pacific Biological Weapons Convention Conference was held in Manila this year and dealt with universalization and national implementation, legislative, administrative and enforcement measures and challenges, disease surveillance and bioterrorism prevention, dual-use science and technology. The Philippines was of the view that regional and sub-regional cooperation was a vital element and dynamic for the advancement of the goals and objectives of the Convention and should be accorded due attention in this Review Conference's deliberations. The Philippines had called for sustained and enhanced support to its national implementation efforts and for the encouragement of further South-South and Triangular cooperation.

ADAM RAVNKILDE ([Denmark](#)) said that Denmark considered building confidence in compliance, supporting national implementation and promoting universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention as overall priorities for this Review Conference. Denmark called upon all States not party to the Convention to adhere to it without further delay. Secondly, this Review Conference would be used as a momentum to reaffirm the Biological Weapons Convention as one of the fundamental pillars of the international community's efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction and further strengthen it in this regard. Developments in biotechnology were taking place at a rapid pace. This was a mostly positive development. However, these rapid changes also entailed an increased risk of misuse of biotechnology with harmful consequences. An essential focus of this Review Conference should be ensuring that the Biological Weapons Convention was continuously up-to-date with new technological developments, so that it could effectively contribute to the challenge of reducing the

threat from biological weapons.

Thirdly, Denmark was fully committed to the implementation of Article X, and shared the view that States parties should work towards the exchange of equipment, material, and scientific and technological information for the use of biological materials or peaceful purposes. In connection with Article X, Denmark furthermore agreed that the Convention should be implemented in a manner that avoided hampering economic and technological developments among States Parties as well as international cooperation. Denmark had recently put forward to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs an offer to contribute to the Secretary-General's mechanism a team of specialists with expertise in biological field investigation and biosecurity, as well as an offer to conduct training of relevance to the mechanism.

NEIL BENEVIDES ([Brazil](#)) said the Biological Weapons Convention, as the first disarmament multilateral treaty to ban a whole category of weapons of mass destruction, constituted an expression of international cooperation and multilateral negotiations. The time was ripe to move toward biological disarmament and non-proliferation. The remarkable progress witnessed in life sciences was certainly one important factor to be considered in this Review Conference. The dynamics of the review process ought to be in line with scientific and industrial developments, particularly in the fields of bio-technology and bio-genetics. Brazil was also supporting reviewing and enhancing confidence building measures so that countries could find it easier to submit them annually. Confidence Building Measures should increasingly become a mechanism for transparency and trust, however they should not be used as a proxy-verification mechanism, nor should they become compulsory.

Brazil stressed that the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X was essential for the realization of the objectives and purpose of the Convention. The exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful uses of biological agents and toxins should be promoted and should not hinder the economic and technological development of States parties. Brazil endorsed the work that was carried out by the Implementation Support Unit during the intersessional period and supported the renewal of its mandate until the Eighth Review Conference in 2016 in addition to granting the unit a coordinating role in matters of international cooperation. For the next intersessional period, Brazil would favour proposals for creating open-ended groups with a substantive mandate and for a fixed time-frame to discuss the improvement of practices and mechanisms for implementing the Convention. Brazil was willing to pursue the debate and negotiations towards the adoption of a verification protocol, but stressed that this should be a consensual decision taken by the States parties to the Convention.

GIANCARLO LEON COLLAZOS ([Peru](#)) said that this was the time to highlight the commitment of Peru to the complete disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, including of biological weapons. In the light of the importance Peru attached to this Convention, Peru had organized a workshop on the Convention for its region. Most countries as well as civil society representatives had contributed to the debate. It had allowed the participants to deal with the key features of the Convention from a regional perspective. Yet Peru was interested in developing its biological industry and thus Peru found it very important to see a more active cooperation and technology exchange.

Strict compliance with the Convention was necessary and the intersessional process was very helpful to reach this better compliance. Peru had a few proposals such as on Article X. Peru supported all initiatives that would strengthen that article through technological and scientific exchanges for peaceful purposes.

For use of the information media; not an official record

DC11/050E

[Back](#)

[Join us](#)
[Follow us](#)
[Flickr](#)

Search Press Releases

Go

[Advanced Search](#)

Related Information

1 December 2011 - GLOBAL BAN ON BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS TO BE REVIEWED AND STRENGTHENED

15 September 2011 - CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT CONCLUDES 2011 SESSION

7 December 2011 - SEVENTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION HEARS FROM FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE NETHERLANDS AND SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES

6 December 2011 - BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION REVIEW CONFERENCE CONCLUDES SECOND DAY OF GENERAL DEBATE

Address: Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. | **P:** +41 (0) 22 917 1234 | **F:** +41 (0) 22 917 0123 | **E:** webmaster@unog.ch

[Copyright](#) | [Terms and Conditions of Use](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Fraud Alert](#)