

The Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties, December 2007

As reported in the *CBW Conventions Bulletin* 76+77 (September 2007), the Meeting of Experts of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) was held in Geneva under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan from Monday 20 to 24 August 2007. The purpose of the Meeting was *to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on:*

(i) *Ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions, and*

(ii) *Regional and sub-regional cooperation on BWC implementation.*

The Meeting of Experts produced a Report, BWC/MSP/2007/MX/3 dated 3 September 2007, which consisted of a 4-page report, together with Annex I, a 21 page paper prepared by the Chairman, Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan, listing the considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions, and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions made by delegations on the topics under discussion at the Meeting, and Annex II, a 5 page listing of the documents of the Meeting of Experts. This Report, and other official BWC documentation, is available at <http://www.opbw.org> and also at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc>. It should also be noted that, as at the Sixth Review Conference and at the Meeting of Experts, Richard Guthrie in association with the BioWeapons Prevention Project provided daily reports on the Meeting of States Parties, and these were made available in hard copy to the delegations, as well as electronically at <http://www.bwpp.org/2007MSP/MSP2007Resources.html>.

The Report, as in the report from MX/2005 two years before, stated that “It was the Chairman’s view that the paper could assist delegations in their preparations for the Meeting of States Parties in December 2007 and in its consideration of how best to ‘*discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on*’ the topics in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference”.

This provided the States Parties with an excellent starting point from which to develop language to meet the requirement of the mandate for the Meeting of State Parties in December 2007 to ‘*discuss, and promote common understandings and effective action*’.

Preparation for the Meeting of States Parties, 10 to 14 December 2007

The Chairman, Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan, wrote to the States Parties on 18 October 2004 to say that as he

foreshadowed at the close of the meeting, and as he had done in previous years, he had consolidated these proposals and ideas, removing duplications and merging similar concepts, to produce a synthesis paper. This synthesis, which was attached to Amb. Khan’s letter, was intended as food for thought, to help guide the States Parties in their preparations for the Meeting of States Parties. It contained no new material, but simply reflected the ideas put forward at the Meeting of Experts in what he hoped was a reasonably coherent, concise and accessible way. It was not intended to exclude any proposal from consideration, and States Parties were of course welcome to make additional proposals at the Meeting of States Parties. The synthesis paper was a resource for States Parties to draw upon in their preparations, and he encouraged them to use it that way.

He went on to add that as to the operation of the Meeting of States Parties, he believed *it is important that the opportunity is taken to add value to the work done at the Meeting of Experts. One particular aspect that I think could be further developed is the role of commercial industry in national implementation, and I propose to invite some industry representatives to address a special informal segment of the meeting. Another area of focus could be the development of the Implementation Support Unit’s role as a clearing-house for offers of and requests for assistance with national implementation, and as a resource for improving coordination of regional and sub-regional cooperation.*

On the outcome of the meeting, he urged that States Parties should aim for a product that genuinely promotes common understanding and that will help States Parties, including those which are not able to participate in our meetings, to take effective action on our two topics. He said that he was interested in hearing the views of delegations on how we can best achieve this, and he would be consulting widely in the coming weeks, both in Geneva and in New York.

To this letter was attached the 6 page synthesis document subsequently issued, prior to the Meeting of States Parties, as MSP/2007/L.1 dated 9 November 2007.

Ambassador Khan subsequently wrote to the group coordinators on 5 December 2007 to provide further information on the two special informal sessions planned for the Meeting of States Parties. In this he said that the special informal session for NGOs would be held from 16:30 on Monday 10 December 2007 and that the special informal session for industry representatives would be held from 10:00 on Thursday 13 December 2007. He pointed out that the arrangements for both sessions would be as follows:

- *The invited participants will take part in an interactive panel discussion with the Chairman, which will last approximately 45 minutes.*

- *The floor will then be opened for delegations to ask questions and engage in discussion with the invited participants. This will also take around 45 minutes, so that the total time for each special session will be about one and a half hours.*
- *The special sessions will be informal, and will not form part of the formal work of the Meeting of States Parties. The content of the discussions will not be reflected in the report of the meeting.*
- *The special sessions do not change in any way the formal status of participation of NGOs or anyone else in BWC meetings.*
- *The special sessions should not be taken as a precedent, and will be held without prejudice to the decision of any future meeting of experts or States Parties on whether and how to engage with civil society.*

In New York in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, on 17 October 2007, Hungary introduced a draft resolution (A/C.1/62/L.37) on the BWC which in its operative paragraphs noted with satisfaction the number of States that have become Party to the Convention and reaffirmed the call upon all States not yet party to become so at an early date, welcomed the information and data provided to date, and reiterated its call upon all States Parties to participate in the exchange of information and data agreed at the Third Review Conference, and, in the fifth and sixth operative paragraphs:

5. *Recalls the decisions reached at the Sixth Review Conference, and calls upon States parties to the Convention to participate in their implementation;*
6. *Requests the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, including all assistance to the annual meetings of the States parties and the meetings of experts.*

Unlike previous comparable resolutions, this one did not specifically address the topics to be considered at the Meeting of States Parties in 2007 or subsequently.

As expected, the First Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote on 31 October 2007. It was subsequently approved by the General Assembly without a vote on 5 December 2007 as A/RES/60/96.

Other Preparations

During the weekend of 8-9 December 2007, before the Meeting of States Parties, there was a workshop in Geneva of the Pugwash Study Group on the Implementation of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions entitled “*Moving Forward after the Sixth Review Conference*”. About 50 participants from 18 countries had a very useful and intense exchange of views which focused on the intersessional programme following the Sixth Review Conference, on universalisation, on the work of the ISU, and on Confidence-Building Measures.

Meeting of States Parties, 10 to 14 December 2007: Opening Plenary Session

The Meeting of States Parties began on Monday 10 December 2007 in a plenary session when the Chairman, Masood Khan of Pakistan, welcomed the representatives from the States Parties. He also welcomed three distinguished guests: Dr. Bernard Vallat, Director-General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Dr. David Heymann, Assistant Director-General of the World Health Organization, and Mr. José Sumpsi, Assistant Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization. They were to be joined on Tuesday 11 December by Mr. Ronald Noble, Secretary-General of Interpol, and Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Chairman then moved to business, noted that his synthesis document (BWC/MSP/2007/L.1) had been issued in all languages, and then turned to procedural matters. In regard to the adoption of the Agenda (BWC/MSP/2007/1), he noted that this had been circulated in all languages. The Agenda was adopted. The programme of work (BWC/MSP/2007/2), which had been developed from that attached to the Chairman’s letter of 18 October 2007, had likewise been circulated and was adopted. He noted that a report (BWC/MSP/2007/3) had already been circulated on the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and said that his report on Universalization (BWC/MSP/2007/4), which would be considered under agenda item 8, would be available shortly in electronic form on the unog/bwc website. Moving on to rules of procedure, he proposed that, as in the past, these meetings should operate under the Rules of Procedure of the Sixth Review Conference applied *mutatis mutandis*. However, he pointed out that formal accreditation would not be required for the annual meetings; registration would be sufficient. These Rules of Procedure were agreed.

In regard to NGOs, the Chairman said that, as he had discussed informally in his consultations with the regional groups, he believed that constructive engagement with civil society is a vital component of effective national implementation of the BWC. With this in mind, he considered it desirable to engage civil society in a more effective manner at this meeting. In particular, he said that he would like to give States Parties the chance to hear the views of commercial industry, as this is a voice that has so far been rather lacking in our deliberations. I am therefore proposing two special informal sessions of our meeting. One will be this afternoon [Monday 10 December] when I will invite six NGO representatives to engage in a dialogue with the Chair. The second will be on Thursday morning [13 December] when four industry representatives will join me for a similar exchange. Both these sessions will begin with an interactive discussion between myself and the invited participants. This will be followed by an opportunity for delegations to ask questions of the participants. I encourage delegations to make the most of this opportunity to explore different ideas and perspectives on the topics we are considering. He emphasised that these would be informal meetings, and would not change the formal status of participation for NGOs or anyone else in the BWC meetings and conferences. The discussions would not be included in the report of the meeting. Furthermore, it would not

be setting any precedent as it will be up to future meetings to decide if and how to continue to engage civil society in our work. The NGO interactive discussion in the afternoon would be followed, subject to time constraints, by the traditional opportunity for other NGOs to make brief statements in the room where the Meeting was held.

Ninety-five States Parties participated in the Meeting of States Parties – two more than in the Meeting of Experts, as El Salvador, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Oman, Paraguay, Republic of Moldova, Senegal, and Sri Lanka participated in December, whilst Bahrain, Benin, Bolivia, Cambodia, Congo, Ghana, Rwanda and Uruguay did not. Six Signatory States participated – two more (Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Myanmar and Nepal) than in August (when Haiti and the Syrian Arab Republic had participated). Two States neither Party or Signatory, Angola and Israel, were granted Observer status; one more (Angola) than in August. Nine international organizations were granted observer status: the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Interpol, the League of Arab States, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the World Health Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health. This was four more than in August when the African Union Commission participated along with the ICRC, Interpol, the League of Arab States and the OPCW. The Convention now has 159 States Parties and 15 Signatory States (see BWC/MSP/2007/MX/INF.4).

There were over 510 participants at the Meeting of States Parties, of which 426 came from States Parties including some 188 participants from capitals. This was about 100 more than at the Meeting of Experts in August 2007 when there were over 410 participants including over 160 from capitals.

The Chairman then made his introductory remarks by noting that he wished to say *a few words about the substantive part of our work, and the outcome of this meeting*. He noted that as he had said at the Meeting of Experts, *we have the benefit this year of building not only on the productive work of the 2003-2005 meetings, but also on the successful outcome of the Sixth Review Conference. That will help us in several ways: we have a consensus final document embodying a shared vision of the Convention, we have the ISU, and we have demonstrated our common purpose and willingness to resolve our differences in constructive and creative ways. The Meeting of Experts showed that States Parties continue to approach our various challenges in a collaborative, collegial spirit, and the wealth of material presented at that meeting shows the impressive resources we can muster when we work in concert.*

He said it was necessary now *to distil the excellent work of the Meeting of Experts into a more concentrated product. We will be working on the same basis as in previous years, on the same understandings about the scope of our mandate. Our task is to “promote common understanding and effective action”, not to negotiate binding agreements. All views and perspectives are welcome. We are not trying to exclude any points of view. States Parties will have different priorities, but all these can be reflected in a fair and transparent manner. His view was that the aim should be for a product that genuinely promotes common understanding and that will help States*

Parties, including those which are not able to participate in our meetings, to take effective action on our two topics. I think we should keep an open mind on the exact form of our outcome, and work together to find a way to reflect our common understandings in a clear and accessible product. We should always keep in mind that we are looking to improve our individual and collective capacity to reduce the risk of biological weapons being developed or used. That should be our focus when considering a potential outcome. More specifically, we should ask ourselves: “will this report be a useful, practical tool for governments wanting to improve their implementation of the BWC?”

He went on to say that during the Meeting of Experts, after listening to State Parties, he had realized that *we needed to focus on three critical areas to change our current state of adjacency to synergy. I think this should be the theme for our meeting.... The States Parties cannot go it alone; do it alone. The three critical areas for collective efforts are: synergy, inclusiveness, and transparency.*

First, synergy. Several international organizations are working on issues impinging directly or indirectly on the BWC regime. We need to strengthen and improve communication and cooperation with these organizations.

Second, inclusiveness. As I have said, it is important to bring in the knowledge and expertise of civil society, and this is what has prompted me to initiate the interactive discussion with NGOs that we will have this afternoon.

Third, transparency. Commercial industry is steering and witnessing exponential growth in the areas of biotechnology, which is the next global wave after Information Technology. And BWC States Parties have been busy in developing the normative and operational framework for dealing with deliberate use of the biosciences as a weapon. Therefore, it is important that States Parties and industry have more open communication and dialogue to prevent the development, acquisition or use of biological weapons. So I am pleased that we will be able to have an exchange with industry representatives later this week.

He concluded by saying that he was *looking forward to a productive and focused meeting, and to working with you all to deliver a useful, practical and concrete outcome.* He encouraged all delegations to contribute freely to the debate, and he hoped that there would be a continuation of the very constructive and creative spirit States Parties had displayed at the Sixth Review Conference and the Meeting of Experts.

The Chairman then invited the special guests to address the meeting. He said that a particularly consistent message that emerged from the Meeting of Experts was that *effective national implementation and regional cooperation require coordinated action from a variety of actors, across different sectors, including security, public health, law enforcement, agriculture, and others.* More and more he saw *the need to work closely with organisations such as OIE, FAO and WHO, to find synergies and develop integrated approaches to interlinked problems.* He was therefore delighted that the heads of several relevant organizations had agreed to share their perspectives, from the summit of their organizations.

José Sumpsi, Assistant Director-General, **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** spoke about current FAO Mechanisms for dealing with the deliberate release of detrimental biological agents. He noted that *although FAO does not have a specific programme dealing with biological weapons or bio- or agro-terrorism, we do have a number of processes and activities that are directly related to the possible deliberate release of detrimental biological agents. These include country, regional and global surveillance, monitoring, reporting, diagnostics and emergency response – most of this in the context of international cooperation, international standards and national and regional capacity building. There are essentially three main areas where this work is relevant: food safety, animal health and plant health.*

He went on to say that the greatest danger from biological agents used as weapons against agriculture is economic loss due to the destruction of livestock and crops, and the impact on small family operations. This would include the loss of food production and also the cost of eradicating the disease and the cost of continued surveillance. Probably the most significant loss in developed countries would be the loss of income from exports and the subsequent impact on the international economy and global food supplies. He said that it is the FAO's considered opinion that the deliberate release of detrimental biological organisms (in terms of food and agriculture) does not require any new processes to be developed that are either not in place already or in addition to those already being foreseen. However, innovative ways of approaching established processes and functions, new technologies, improved collaboration and a great deal more capacity building to build on existing national expertise and systems are required urgently.

He concluded by noting that FAO already deals with many of the processes and systems necessary to monitor, diagnose and control deliberate pest and disease introductions as part of the system that already exists for natural plant and animal pest and disease outbreaks, and food safety. However, considerable further capacity building is necessary to provide an effective and reliable international system based on national capabilities, particularly in the area of plant pests. FAO looks forward to continuing to collaborate in the area of deliberate release of detrimental biological organisms and would welcome any discussions on how national capacity can be enhanced in this regard. FAO was looking forward to increased synergies in future.

The Chairman then invited States Parties to ask any questions or make observations. There were none.

David Heymann, Assistant Director-General, **World Health Organization (WHO)**, then said that *it is clear in the world today that the infectious disease situation is complex, is dynamic and is ever changing. More human infections often develop from a breach in the barrier between animals and humans and a new organism infects humans and in some instances can transmit from human to human causing disease outbreaks and, in some instances, pandemics. He went on to recall that WHO set up an emerging infections programme in 1995 and one of the*

first undertakings of this programme was to modify and to update its framework for global surveillance and response, the International Health Regulations. The International Health Regulations were developed in 1969 and these Regulations governed three infectious diseases in 1995. Those diseases were cholera, plague and yellow fever. Any country that had one of these diseases was required under the International Health Regulations to report this disease to WHO. And then a series of pre-determined measures would be undertaken by member countries, such as requiring a yellow fever vaccination card from a country where a yellow fever outbreak was occurring. This system did not work. As you know, WHO cannot legally enforce its regulations and countries did not often report diseases because it was damaging for their economies. In addition, these Regulations covered only three infectious diseases and were not up to date with all the emerging infectious diseases that are occurring today and at risk to travel internationally.

He noted that when a decision was made to update and revise these Regulations, one of the first groups that was consulted was that of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. Two issues emerged from these discussions – first, that the systems necessary to detect and to respond to naturally occurring infectious diseases were the same as those that could and would detect a public health emergency from a deliberately caused infectious disease. The second issue was that WHO's neutrality was its strength, and that they needed, as they revised the Regulations, to be sure that that remained a neutral system. He continued by saying that *WHO then decided to revise the Regulations from a bottom-up approach, and this was first to set up a network of networks which would help WHO detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks that were occurring in member countries and for which member countries requested support. This network of networks was set up from 120 existing institutions and networks around the world that were doing surveillance and response activities for infectious diseases. They included groups such as the Red Cross and Red Crescents; it included NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières; and it included many developing country and industrialized country institutions such as the Institutes Pasteur and their network, the Centres for Disease Control in the US and its network; and many other industrialized and developing country networks managed by groups such as APEC, ASEAN and others. Those networks are constantly providing information to WHO and, when a request comes from a country for a response to an outbreak, WHO, through this network of networks, mobilizes technical partners to assist in that response.*

He went to note that *after the SARS outbreak, the revision of the International Health Regulations picked up great momentum because the world understood the importance of these Regulations and the Regulation revision was completed in May of 2005. The Regulations came into effect this year, two years later, in June of 2007, and the Revised International Health Regulations consist of three different parts. The first is a requirement of all Member countries – and there are 193 Member countries of WHO – to establish core capacity in surveillance and response, the ultimate goal of the Regulations therefore*

being that countries throughout the world can detect and respond to outbreaks rapidly so that they do not cause an international threat. The second part and the third part of the Regulations are a safety net in case national alert and response fails, and that safety net, through the mechanisms of GORN (the Global Outbreak and Response Network), will detect and respond to diseases which are not reported or picked up nationally. The second part of those Regulations therefore is continuing global surveillance through the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network but not just limiting to those three diseases (cholera, plague and yellow fever) but to any public health emergency of international concern, decided by a decision tree which is in the International Health Regulations. So the first part of the Regulations is core capacity, the second part is a safety net to ensure collective detection and collective response worldwide to an outbreak, and the third is measures required at airports and seaports to prevent vectors that might be carrying infectious diseases from proliferating and entering countries.

He concluded by pointing out that WHO will continue to respond to any outbreak of international importance or of national importance and we will respond in the normal way that we do to a public health emergency. Should the investigation determine that the outbreak is not being caused by a natural occurrence, that it is being caused by a deliberate occurrence, WHO would continue with the Member countries with our public health response and transfer responsibility for further investigation to the United Nations system through the Security Council. We recently established very close working relationships with OIE and the FAO. This is recognized through a tripartite agreement where we meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of importance to our three agencies and respond jointly to epidemics, such as we are doing presently to an epidemic of Rift Valley fever, a joint response from the three agencies. Of course, this tripartite arrangement and agreement has been strengthened because of the pandemic threat from avian influenza which is the major naturally occurring public health threat that we have today. We will continue working with our partners in OIE and FAO and also are grateful for the guidance which has been provided in the past from the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and will continue to call on you for guidance in the future.

The Chairman again invited the States Parties to ask questions or make observations. **Germany** noted that the revised International Health Regulations should be taken into account when considering the CBM on declarations of outbreaks of disease, as an annual update could be obtained from the WHO. **Dr. Heymann** responded by noting that the IHR now requires member States to have a national focus point enabling 24 hour communications with the WHO and that effort was ongoing for capacity strengthening in regard to surveillance and response.

Bernard Vallat, the Director General of the **World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)**, made a presentation of the view of OIE in support of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention objectives. He considered why new animal health strategies became crucial, pointing

out that in 2006, over 21 billion food animals were produced to help feed a population of over 6 billion people and that projections towards 2020 indicated that the demand for animal protein would increase by 50% especially in developing countries. Furthermore, there is nowhere in the world from which we are remote and no-one from whom we are disconnected. He considered the factors influencing the emergence of new diseases both now and in the future and pointed out the zoonotic potential of animal diseases, in that 60% of human diseases are zoonotic and 75% of emerging diseases are zoonotic. Furthermore, diseases can now spread faster across the world than the incubation period of most diseases.

He then set out the role of OIE, which was created in 1924 and, as of December 2007, has 172 Member Countries. Its objectives are:

1. To ensure transparency in the global **animal disease and zoonosis situation**
2. To collect, analyse and disseminate **scientific veterinary information**
3. To provide expertise and encourage international solidarity **in the control of animal diseases**
4. Within its mandate under the WTO SPS Agreement, to safeguard world trade by publishing **health standards** for international trade in animals and animal products
5. To improve the legal framework and resources of **national Veterinary Services**
6. To provide a better guarantee of the **safety of food of animal origin** and to promote **animal welfare** through a science-based approach

He outlined the OIE Reference Laboratories network and how OIE seeks to minimize the threat of emerging animal diseases, including through good governance of veterinary services.

In regard to the OIE and the BWC, he noted that the OIE had made contributions to the BWC meetings in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, and emphasized the importance of:

- *Global surveillance and preparedness*
- *Inclusion of non-domestic animals (wild animals)*
- *Animal diseases including zoonosis*
- *Adherence to international animal health standards*
- *Good veterinary governance*

The Chairman encouraged States Parties to ask questions of any of the three distinguished guests and noted that their involvement in this way represented a new phase in the way in which the States Parties to the BWC were dealing with issues. No further questions or observations were made.

General Debate, Monday 10 December 2007

The Chairman thanked the three visitors and then moved on to open the **General Debate** in which he asked that individual States Parties should limit their statements to 5 to 7 minutes and that States Parties making a statement on behalf of a Group should limit such statements to 10 to 12 minutes.

Portugal spoke on behalf of the European Union and noted that the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the

stabilisation and association process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia aligned themselves with the statement. He said that *the EU attaches the utmost importance to the effective implementation of the obligations of the BTWC. 35 years after its signature, the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention remains the internationally recognized normative and legal cornerstone of biological disarmament and non proliferation.* The statement went on to point out that *all EU Member States have taken, in the last few years, further measures to enhance national implementation of the Convention.* The statement then put each of the EU Working Papers into context. In regard to the ISU, the EU said that *the Unit plays an indispensable role in the areas of administrative support, receipt and dissemination of CBMs and implementation of all decisions and recommendations of the Review Conference. The EU believes that its expertise could also be used to perform other tasks in the fields of implementation, cooperation and assistance as well as universalisation. In order to maximize the utility of the ISU, and bearing in mind its limited financial and human resources, the EU is considering providing, through the adoption of a Joint Action, additional financial assistance to support possible specific activities and projects designed to help the ISU to fulfil its mandate. The European Union has produced a working paper with suggestions on possible activities of the ISU that could be supported by States Parties. We would like to call on all States to consider the suggestions put forward and the possible financing of the ISU.* The statement went on to note that *regional and sub-regional cooperation on the implementation of the Convention does not imply only cooperation with States. The expertise of some international organisations in the elaboration of mechanisms for surveillance and detection of disease outbreaks should also be taken into account by States Parties to the BTWC. In this context, the European Union hopes to finalise soon a new Joint Action in support of the World Health Organization activities in the area of bio-safety and biosecurity in the framework of the European Union Strategy against the proliferation of WMD. The main thrust of this new initiative is to ensure the safety and security of microbial or other biological agents and toxins in laboratories and other facilities, including during transportation as appropriate and promoting bio-risk reduction practices and awareness.* In regard to this Meeting of States Parties, the EU concluded by saying that *the final document should make practical recommendations on how to promote further common understanding and effective action on the two topics under discussion during this year.*

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Portugal submitted a CBM in 2007]

Cuba spoke on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States, saying that *the BWC is still an incomplete and perhaps even vulnerable instrument. This valuable piece of the disarmament machinery has to be improved and developed. The Group of States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to*

the Convention strongly believes that the only sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement, including on verification, dealing with all the Articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner. The statement went on to say that in regard to the two topics being considered this year, the NAM Group wished to share some points:

1. *Although each State Party is committed to accomplish all the provisions of the Convention, the implementation of the BWC at the national level nevertheless depends on the particular circumstances, inter alia, constitutional procedures and levels of development of each State Party.*
2. *The implementation of the Convention at the national level is not only limited to enacting and enhancing relevant national legislations, but it also has to do with other actions which require human and financial resources, not always readily available to developing countries. For instance, appointing or establishing national authorities in charge of implementing the Convention requires personnel and resources to perform their duties. The same happens with the export and import controls, which also require adequate equipment and technology for detecting violations.*
3. *The detection of disease outbreaks or the measures for fighting the effects of an accidental release of biological agents and toxins are other circumstances in which political will alone is not enough.*
4. *Some States Parties to the Convention have identified these and other obstacles in their cooperation and assistance activities within the framework of the Convention, as it was informed during the Meeting of Experts, held last August, when details of the organization of regional seminars and symposiums were presented.*
5. *All of this reinforces our idea of consolidating international cooperation activities under Article X of the Convention, as part of the cooperation for the national implementation of the Convention and the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes. We hope that this meeting of States Parties will adopt concrete measures in this regard.*
6. *Likewise, the national implementation of the Convention requires regular review of the relevant national legislation by each State Party, in a manner designed to avoid hampering the economic and technological development of States Parties to the Convention or international cooperation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities, including the international exchanges of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins and equipment for the processing, use or production of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.*
7. *The international cooperation at all levels, particularly regional and sub-regional cooperation, as well as bilateral cooperation, should be fully promoted among States Parties, always on the basis of mutual agree-*

ments. In this regard, the experiences shown this year are quite valid and we urge all States Parties to develop this kind of cooperation and to keep the rest of States Parties informed of their progress.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Cuba submitted a CBM in 2007]

Canada on behalf of the JACKSNNZ group (Japan, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand) said that *we believe that enactment and effective enforcement of national and sub-national legislative measures are our core obligations under the Convention, and we continue to improve and refine these in line with evolving threats and technological progress. We recognise that achieving effective legislation, regulations and enforcement is neither easy nor is it a one-time project; it involves many stakeholders in our respective governments working together continuously, on rapidly changing, highly technical issues. National implementation of the BTWC naturally involves biological science practitioners working among themselves and also in partnership with national governments, ensuring that there is a nexus between science and policy. Consequently, we are pleased to see representatives of civil society and the private sector at this meeting, and we are looking forward to continuing cooperative interaction this week and in the future.* The statement went on to say that *we believe that the timely submission and availability of CBMs to other States Parties is critical to the full implementation of the BTWC. In this regard, our countries submit annual CBMs which are on file with the Implementation Support Unit, both in hard copy and online, and some of the JACKSNNZ States have, as an additional measure of transparency, also posted their CBM returns on the public section of the ISU's website. We would urge all countries that are not yet doing so to submit CBMs to the ISU on an annual basis.* The statement concluded by saying: *looking to the immediate future, measures to improve biosafety and biosecurity, including for laboratories, and 'codes of conduct' in bioscience and bio-technology research, feature in next year's intersessional process. Mindful of the participation this week of civil society and private sector practitioners, our countries call on all here to start considering now possible elements toward 'codes of conduct' for researchers in the life sciences, building on the outcome of the 2005 Meeting of States Parties. Full implementation of the BTWC will occur when its key provisions are imparted and implemented in the classrooms and laboratories of all our nations. Accordingly, the real work of the BTWC will continue once we leave this hall on Friday, for if what happens in Geneva, stays in Geneva, our efforts to support the Convention will not bear fruit.*

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Canada submitted a CBM in 2007]

Iran then spoke, saying *the International Community should spare no efforts to strengthen the Convention and promote its effectiveness.* The statement then went on to say *on the follow-up mechanism aiming at promotion of common*

understanding among States Parties we would like to reiterate our position that this mechanism can not be a substitute to the negotiations on the Protocol on strengthening the Convention. We still believe that the effective strengthening of the BTWC is only possible through the adoption of a comprehensive, multilaterally negotiated international instrument. We call upon those opposed to this Protocol, to abide by the wish of international community including that of the Members of Non Aligned Movement for resuming afore-mentioned negotiations. The statement also noted that Iran had submitted its CBM return and concluded by noting that the Meeting of Experts in 2007 had highlighted once more the importance of adopting effective national measures and that a number of useful ideas had been raised in regard to regional and sub-regional cooperation that should be further elaborated in regional and sub-regional seminars and workshops.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Iran submitted a CBM in 2007]

The Republic of **Korea** then spoke, saying that *the intersessional work programme got under way with the Meeting of Experts in August this year, which provided States Parties with a good opportunity to share their experiences of national implementation of the Convention.* It went on to express satisfaction about the ISU and said that *in order to develop the ISU as "a clearing house" as Mr. Chairman referred to in the course of preparations for this meeting, all the States Parties should strengthen interaction with the ISU by voluntarily providing relevant information and utilizing it as a focal point.* The Chairman's synthesis paper was welcomed and the importance stressed of *cooperation at the regional and sub-regional level for the implementation of the Convention is greater than ever before, as biological weapons do not know national boundaries.*

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that the Republic of Korea submitted a CBM in 2007]

China then spoke, saying that *the Convention has played an irreplaceable role in the comprehensive prohibition, complete destruction, non-proliferation of biological weapons and prevention of bio-terrorism. On the other hand, faced with terrorism and disease outbreaks, all States Parties should make full use of the Convention as an important platform to strengthen cooperation and communication, promote implementation and other capacity of the Convention.* The statement went on to say that *China believes that adopting effective national implementation measures in accordance with the Convention and respective national situations constitutes basic obligations for the States Parties, as well as the important prerequisite and guarantee for effective implementation of all articles of the Convention. ... China has the following suggestions on strengthening the national implementation measures and regional cooperation on implementation of the Convention:*

1. *States Parties should put in place and improve a series of laws and regulations on implementation of all articles of the Convention and take effective measures to ensure the rigorous law enforcement.*

II. States Parties should establish a national implementation mechanism with clear division of responsibility and effective coordination to ensure the full implementation of all the related laws and measures.

III. States Parties should enhance the publicity of relevant laws and regulations through various kinds of forms, with a view to training the relevant personnel and strengthen the implementation capacity building.

IV. States Parties should, in the principle of equality, cooperation and mutual respect, take active part in regional, sub-regional and bilateral cooperation on implementation of the Convention. States Parties should provide assistance to other States Parties in need, particularly in developing countries, with a view to promoting the international exchanges in biological field and raise the implementation capacity.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that China submitted a CBM in 2007]

The **United States** said that they attach *great importance to the intersessional work program. Review conferences come but once every five years and concerted and constructive use of the intervening period is essential to advancing the implementation and objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention.* In regard to national implementation, the United States said that *enforcement is an essential aspect of national implementation for without it national legislation is a hollow deterrent to acquisition and use of biological weapons. And to be effective against biological threats, it was recognized that effective coordination among police and public health authorities must form the foundation of any enforcement effort. As we prepare the final report of our proceedings this week, it is important that we recognize the critical role for effective enforcement in the overall plan for national implementation.* The statement went on to consider universalization, and the US pledged to *continue coordinating our bilateral efforts with those of the ISU and the many other States Parties involved in bringing their neighbors on board. The emphasis this year on how to implement our BWC obligations, as well as on how we can help others do so is important for universality activities. With the sound foundation you and others have set in the past six months, all Parties now have current information and a functioning clearinghouse in which to share our progress.* The United States went on to *commend the work the ISU has accomplished in the six months since its inception. ISU background papers, compilations and notifications have been carefully researched and arrive well in advance of our meetings to ensure the greatest use to Parties. We look forward to more of the same in the next four years.* However, the United States would like to *note its deep concern over recommendations encouraging support for increased responsibilities for the Implementation Support Unit. While we wholeheartedly encourage voluntary contributions for the ISU to carry out its assigned tasks, such funding must not in any way undermine the strict delineation of the ISU operations that was the basis for the compromise text of the mandate. If regional groups or States Parties wish to provide additional funding, that funding should be used to help*

the three-person ISU to fulfill the tasks assigned and not seek to expand that mandate into new, unauthorized areas. The statement concluded by emphasizing that *the objective of the group this week is focused and not open-ended.*

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that the United States submitted a CBM in 2007]

Libya then spoke, and took the opportunity to outline the national measures being taken by Libya in establishing its National Committee for Biological Morality. These measures include several working parties to consider various elements of legislation as well as codes of conduct.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Libya submitted a CBM in 2007]

Turkey then spoke, noting that Turkey had shared detailed information on national legislation, law enforcement and regional cooperation. The statement went on to say that *in the context of BWC activities in 2007, equally noteworthy is the establishment of the "Implementation Support Unit" (ISU) in 2007, which we value as a remarkable step to strengthen the BWC regime. Although modest in size, the ISU has already been instrumental in providing institutional support to States Parties.* Turkey also welcomed *the streamlining of the procedure for the submission and distribution of the "Confidence Building Measures" (CBMs), with a view to increase the level of participation,* and noted that Turkey had submitted its CBM report in April 2007. The statement went on to say that *we share the broad understanding within the BWC community that further efforts have to be devoted to strengthening and improving the implementation of the Convention. Accordingly, States Parties may wish to make use of the 2007-2010 period to consider fresh ideas for an implementation mechanism to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention.*

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Turkey submitted a CBM in 2007]

The General Debate then ceased and resumed in the afternoon.

Brazil spoke on behalf of a group of Latin American states (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela), noting that at the Meeting of Experts submissions had been made of *specific proposals springing from our joint position within the framework of the Review Conference 2006. Likewise, various delegations made substantive contributions which can be very useful indeed, so as to identify elements applicable to national cases or to any other regions or subregions.* The statement went on to urge that the ISU should promote and coordinate workshops or seminars on relevant aspects for the region. *Along these lines, we invite the ISU to take up contact with regional or subregional organizations or with groups of interested countries so as to organize activities which will enable us to identify good practices for the application of the Convention. We reiterate our appeal to the international organizations as well as to the donor*

community to cooperate in this task. We believe that initiatives such as this one will contribute to the creation of a space for regional discussion which will encourage faster, more deeper understanding of the benefits and challenges raised by the application of the Convention. The statement also said that we reiterate once again the importance of having a multisectoral and multidimensional approach in the follow-up of the Convention. A multisectoral approach is consolidated with the participation of Civil Society, in particular the industrial sector and academic circles, the scientific community and the non-governmental organizations in our regions, since said sectors do encourage a better understanding of the obligations which are endorsed in the Convention. It continued by noting that a multidimensional approach presupposes a comprehensive vision, an articulate vision, of the different elements which are part and parcel of this instrument. Brazil concluded by highlighting the adoption of Resolution AG/Res.2107 of the Organization of American States on 7 June 2005 in which we commit ourselves to adopt and apply immediately effective measures to establish internal controls so as to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and its vectors, including through the establishment of adequate controls of the materials related to this, since they then abstain in giving any kind of support to the non-State stakeholders who are trying to develop, acquire, manufacture, own, use or transfer said weapons.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Brazil submitted a CBM in 2007]

Saudi Arabia then spoke, reaffirming its commitment to the BWC and noting that it had submitted its first report to the UN as required under SCR 1540. The statement said that Saudi Arabia is among the States calling for endeavours to ensure that the Middle East becomes a region free of weapons of mass destruction in keeping with the recommendation made by the Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs ... at the Arab League to formulate a draft agreement ... to make the Middle Eastern region free of weapons of mass destruction. The statement noted that a number of meetings had been held at the Arab League and that it has been able to formulate a draft agreement.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Saudi Arabia had not submitted a CBM in 2007]

Australia then spoke, saying that in September 2007, Australia had enacted new legislation, the National Health Security Act, which established controls for the security of certain biological agents that have the potential to be used as biological weapons. This new Act provides for the establishment of a National Authority to regulate and monitor facilities handling security sensitive biological agents. ... The Act also provides for a registration scheme addressing physical, personnel and transport security concerns, and includes a security audit and inspection process. And, importantly, it provides for education and awareness-raising campaigns. The statement went on to say that this year, a team of key research and academic

experts revised the Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research to link it in with the national statement on biosecurity thereby ensuring better coordinated cross-agency implementation of the BWC.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Australia submitted a CBM in 2007]

South Africa then spoke, noting that South Africa remains committed to the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) to ensure that our common goal of preventing the threat posed by biological weapons is achieved. In the above regard, my delegation continues to believe that this is not a commitment or a goal that can only be undertaken by individual States or groups of States acting on their own. If our opposition to biological weapons is to be sustained in the long term, it is necessary that the members of the international community — as a whole — take action and commit themselves to strengthening the norm against the development, production, stockpiling and use of these reprehensible weapons. South Africa continues to see the strengthening of the implementation of the BWC as a core element of international security. The statement went on to say that South Africa is committed to close collaboration with countries in the region and within the Continent on the implementation of the Convention and in the advancement of the goals of the BWC. The importance of sharing experiences and learning from best practices in the implementation of the Convention and in regional cooperation was highlighted at the Meeting of Experts. We view this as fundamental to the successful implementation of the BWC and to the forging of a community of nations, which will be our best defence against the threat posed by biological weapons. It is through this type of collaboration that countries would also be able to identify the best solutions for the challenges they are facing in aligning their national processes with the BWC. The statement concluded by expressing South Africa's appreciation for the efforts of the Implementation Support Unit and to encourage the ISU to keep up the good work. We would likewise also thank you for your initiative in arranging special informal sessions during the course of this Meeting of States Parties and look forward to the opportunity to hear the views of NGOs and Industry representatives at these sessions.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that South Africa had not submitted a CBM in 2007]

India then spoke, noting that while we have embarked upon a new inter-sessional work programme, we must remind ourselves of the need to strengthen the Convention to deal with the widening threat spectrum arising from possible malevolent uses of biotechnology, which is creating new ways of manipulating basic life processes. The dramatic progress in the field of synthetic biology has increased the possibility of engineering living organisms. Moreover, DNA synthesis and genomic technologies utilise equipment and materials that are readily available and relatively inexpensive and much of the relevant information is

accessible on e-databases. Adding to the spectre of new and deadlier microorganisms and toxins is the growing possibility that non-State actors could acquire and use biological warfare agents as new instruments of terror. The statement continued we associate ourselves with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by Cuba earlier today, particularly its emphasis on strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement, including on verification, dealing with all the articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner. In the face of the emerging challenges, verification of compliance will be an important element in providing the assurance that all States Parties are meeting their commitments and obligations.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that India submitted a CBM in 2007]

Morocco then spoke, commending the efforts which the Chairman had been making towards universalisation and saying *these deserve to be stressed and encouraged.... It should also give rise to emulation by those who will succeed you as Chairman of the Conference.* The statement went on to say that it should be recalled that the Convention on Biological Weapons remains an incomplete instrument in the absence of a verification mechanism which is yet to be established through negotiations and which should take into consideration all the articles of the Convention. It concluded by saying that Morocco is an ardent defender of complete and total disarmament and is a State Party to virtually all of the legal instruments concerning disarmament and since the deposition of the instruments of ratification to the Convention on Biological Weapons in 2002, it has regularly submitted its national report.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Morocco submitted a CBM in 2007]

The **Russian Federation** then spoke saying that the BWC is one of the cornerstones of disarmament and non-proliferation of the WMD. Its significance is rising against the backdrop of rapid growth of life sciences whose discoveries may have dual use nature, and the danger of use of weaponised new and genetically modified biological agents and toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict. Russia fully complies with its obligations under the Convention. The statement went on to say that while supporting the decision adopted by the Sixth Review Conference to continue the intersessional process, we still look forward to an early resumption of multilateral negotiations to develop a legally binding instrument to verify compliance with the Convention that will be the best way of strengthening its regime. Our position of principle on this point remains without change. In regard to this year's topic of national implementation, Russia said that we should incorporate the results of the year's work in the outcome document that will serve to further strengthen the regime of the Convention. It will be useful to attach to this meeting's report, as it was done before, all statements and working papers provided to the

Chairman. On the subject of CBMs, Russia said that at this stage in history of the BWC confidence building measures (CBMs) are the main instrument to enhance mutual confidence of the States Parties in compliance with the Convention. We think that CBMs are very important and useful. However, the situation remains unsatisfactory because nearly 100 States Parties, including those that have a developed biotechnological industry and advanced R&D facilities, fail to submit declarations. In this connection on 15 October the depositaries of the Convention - Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom - circulated a Joint Statement to support universal submission of CBM information, which contains an offer to share, upon request, expertise on compiling data and filing CBM returns. I call upon all States Parties to annually submit their CBMs.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that the Russian Federation submitted a CBM in 2007]

Iraq then spoke, saying that national enforcement is based on legislative foundations as well as on surveillance and noted that in regard to Iraq, Article 9, Paragraph E of the Constitution of Iraq commits itself to not acquire, nor to produce, nor to develop weapons of mass destruction whatever they may be. The statement went on to say that our delegation thinks that the universality of the Convention is of paramount importance and that we should find the necessary means to enable us to strengthen the Convention and its prohibition of biological weapons. Multilateral negotiations are an effective instrument so as to guarantee the application and universality of the Convention.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Iraq had not submitted a CBM in 2007]

Algeria then spoke, saying that the proliferation of biological weapons and toxins always remains an ubiquitous threat to peace and international security. We are in a position to be worried about such a threat for many reasons. The science of biology, its application in very varied realms, is witnessing tremendous headway. We see that this technical progress, with the progress made in means of communication, make this threat all the more possible and I would like to add to this the phenomenon of international terrorism. The statement went on to say that our satisfaction as regards the measures decided on in 2006 cannot however be complete unless these measures are part of a progressive procedure so as to reach a commitment on the consolidation of the normative setting set up by the Convention. This framework has to be up to the threat that we have to face up to. In fact, the scope of the Convention remains limited because it does not have a verification mechanism to comply with its provisions. We can only welcome the compromise and mutually understanding spirit which has characterized our work up until now. I hope that it will lead us in the near future to starting on a new stage, that is, reaching an agreement so as to finish with the work of the Convention through a Protocol so as to introduce all the

necessary transparency and activities in the biological programmes of the States Parties. Algeria concluded by outlining the recommendations of the group set up by the Head of the Government, aiming at the promulgation of legislative regulatory texts which are necessary for the implementation of the Convention, including penal provisions.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Algeria had not submitted a CBM in 2007]

Malaysia then spoke, saying that *Malaysia shares the view that there should not be “one-size-fits-all” solution for national implementation and that approaches should be tailored to the individual circumstances and needs of individual State Party. The existing legislative provisions in Malaysia are adequate for the purpose of implementing the Convention. This notwithstanding, Malaysia is in the process of enacting two new legislations and amending other relevant existing legislative provisions, where necessary, to strengthen and deal with developments in this area. The statement went on to say that Malaysia also continues to hold the principle that effective implementation of the Convention requires non-discriminatory and balanced approach to all provisions of the Convention. We fully subscribe to the NAM principled position which holds that the BWC forms a composite whole and that while it is possible to address related issues separately, it is necessary for all the inter-linked elements of the Convention to be dealt with in a balanced and comprehensive manner, whether they relate to regulation, compliance or promotion. It concluded by noting that Malaysia recognises the importance for States Parties to undertake serious and persistent efforts and concrete actions to strengthen national and international efforts and capabilities in the measures stipulated in the Convention. At the same time, we remain strongly of the view that there should be similar commitment and undertaking among all States Parties towards promoting and enhancing international co-operation. Given the increasing development in the field of biological science, there is in fact an ever growing need for scientific and technological co-operation between States Parties both for the social-economic progress of developing countries and for the fight against infectious diseases and the threats of bio-terrorism. In this regard, we reiterate our call to those States Parties that are in the position to do so to adopt positive measures to promote socioeconomic development through technology transfer and international co-operation in the field related to the Convention.*

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Malaysia had not submitted a CBM in 2007]

Sudan then spoke, saying that *Sudan acceded to the BWC in 2003 and Sudan will go ahead in completing all the necessary steps and legal measures needed in order to ratify the Convention. Sudan will also aim at drawing up a well structured programme for capacity building through taking all the necessary national measures to implement the Convention at the national level, particularly the establishment of a focus point and the drawing*

up of national legislation, as well as providing support to strengthen national scientific institutions and national enforcement agencies. The statement concluded by noting that Sudan would like to draw attention to our needs in capacity-building and in technical assistance programmes that will enable us to carry out our commitments regarding the implementation of the Convention on the national level.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Sudan had not submitted a CBM in 2007]

NGO Informal Session

The Chairman then suspended the afternoon session in order to reopen the meeting in informal session for a round-table discussion involving six NGOs. The Chairman and the representatives of six NGOs sat round a table in the body of the conference room with the intention of making the round-table discussion more interactive with the delegations. The Chairman pointed out that this was an informal session, which would not be referred to in the report of the meeting and that it should not be taken as establishing a precedent. However, he recognized that these NGOs had supported the Biological Weapons Convention over many years and had made many inputs from a holistic multidisciplinary viewpoint. The Chairman said that he had asked each of the NGOs to make a short tightly focused statement on “*Practical Contributions of Civil Society to National Implementation and Regional Cooperation*”. The six statements were made in the following order:

Professor Graham S. Pearson, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.

Ms. Angela Woodward, Executive Director, VERTIC

Dr. Filippa Lentzos, BIOS Research Centre for the study of Bioscience, Biomedicine, Biotechnology and Society, London School of Economics.

Professor Marie Chevrier, Chair, Scientists Working Group on Biological and Chemical Weapons, The Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation, Washington D.C.

Professor Kathryn Nixdorff, The INES Working Group on Biological and Toxin Weapons Control, Department of Microbiology and Genetics, Darmstadt University of Technology.

Dr. Jean-Pascal Zanders, Director, BioWeapons Prevention Project, Geneva.

Following the statements, the Chairman briefly summarised what had been said and then invited delegations to ask questions and make observations. Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Germany all took the opportunity to do so in the limited time available before the Chairman moved on to invite three NGOs who would not be in Geneva on Tuesday 11 December to make short statements in the traditional way to the informal session. Statements were made by:

Professor Barry Kellman, DePaul University College of Law. Raphael Della Ratta, Bioproliferation Prevention Project

Manager, Partnership for Global Security, Washington, D.C.

Professor Malcolm Dando, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.

The Chairman then closed the informal session and reminded delegates that on Tuesday 11 December 2007, the General Debate would continue with statements from the Director General of INTERPOL and of the OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons). There would also be the opportunity for a further short informal session to hear some additional NGO statements.

General Debate, Tuesday 11 December 2007

The Chairman opened the General Debate by inviting a further special guest, **Ronald K. Noble**, Interpol Secretary-General, to speak. Mr. Noble said that he was pleased to see delegations from 90 States Parties to the Convention representing a broad range of fields including diplomacy, defence, disarmament, science and agriculture, along with representatives from international and non-governmental organizations involved in law enforcement, public health, academia and security, here at this meeting. This shows that we are all united by a common concern and a common goal. He went on to note that States Parties to the Convention called the use of biological weapons “repugnant to the conscience of mankind” and pledged that “no effort should be spared to minimise the risk” when they entered it into force in 1975 as the world’s first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons. He pointed out that Interpol shares these concerns, and one of our top priorities in the framework of our global anti-terrorism efforts is to help police in our 186 member countries prevent the terrorist use of biological agents by non-state actors - as well as ensure that these same police forces are prepared to respond to a bioterrorist attack. He went on to outline what had been done by Interpol in its Bioterrorism Prevention Programme launched in 2004. He said that *the work that you have done with regard to the Biological Weapons Convention has provided a solid foundation from which Interpol formulates its policies and activities in the area of preventing bioterrorism by non-state actors. In fact, the Sixth Review Conference in 2006 recognized the vital role of non-state parties. Interpol sees great opportunities in assisting you in achieving the goals of the Convention by building the capacity of law enforcement agencies around the world to fight acts of bioterrorism.* He went on to note that Interpol has also organized several regional workshops and training sessions throughout the world. Our regional workshops in Chile, Oman, Singapore, South Africa and Ukraine have trained more than 300 experts from 130 Interpol member countries in bioterrorism prevention and response.... At the conclusion of each regional workshop, delegates agreed to identify individuals in every participating country who would be responsible for maintaining contact with the Interpol General Secretariat on bioterrorism issues and who would also identify and work with their counterparts in their national health authorities. This type of cross-jurisdictional collaboration is an essential element of Interpol’s preparedness strategy. He concluded by saying that in order to prevent bioterrorism and to prepare us for the unthinkable we must create a culture of stronger co-operation among agencies and the local, national and international

levels, a culture of greater sharing of information with Interpol. Working together, with continued commitment and vigilance, we will be able to thwart potential attacks and minimise risks.

The Chairman then invited delegations to ask questions or make observations. There were none.

The General Debate then continued with a statement made by **Nigeria** which said that *Nigeria remains consistent and untiring in her efforts to ensure the full realisation of the objectives of the BWC, including the need to discourage the use of biological weapons in whatever form or circumstance.* The statement went on to say that while Nigeria already has in place a National Authority for the implementation of the BWC, it is still in the process of incorporating the Convention into national law. We are, however, happy to inform that efforts to accelerate work on a Draft Legislation has been boosted by support from the European Union, which has offered, as it has done in the past, to provide technical assistance by means of a workshop to review and tighten all the nuts and bolts in the Draft Legislation. Our work plan with the European Union is to get a robust Draft Legislation ready by the first quarter of 2008. Nigeria is also talking with some States Parties that have indicated their intent to support our capacity-building programmes. While I seize this opportunity to applaud the European Union for its continuing support, I must say that Nigeria looks forward to a successful outcome of ongoing engagements with our partners as we seek to build up our capacity in critical areas.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Nigeria submitted a CBM in 2007]

Germany then spoke, saying that *national implementation of the Convention is a pivotal point for the success of the BTWC. We are seeing some progress in the field of national implementation. However, the number of States Parties lacking legislative and other measures to fulfil the objectives of the BTWC still gives us cause for concern. We understand the difficulties that some States Parties may have in incorporating all the objectives of the Convention into national law and regulations, as national implementation of the BTWC obligations touches on a broad range of topics. Some States Parties in the past might have thought that they did not need to enact specific BTWC implementation legislation since they do not have - or they believe that they do not have - relevant materials within their territory. However, inasmuch as the BTWC contains binding obligations on biological weapons and relevant materials, all BTWC States Parties must enact and enforce appropriate national legislative measures. This does not mean that at any given time all States Parties will have the same degree of national implementation requirements. However, each State Party should identify its deficits and enact and implement adequate laws, regulations and measures to cover its specific situation. The EU Joint Action in support of the BTWC and a number of States Parties offer their good services to assist States*

Parties requiring assistance in their national implementation efforts. We would like to see these offers being more widely utilized. The statement went on to say that as we have recognized that some States Parties link national BTWC implementation efforts with CWC National Authorities activities. For this reason, Germany recently provided financial support to the Implementation Support Unit to participate in the meeting of CWC National Authorities in The Hague in November 2007. In the margins of this meeting ISU representatives addressed BTWC universalization with national representatives from CWC States Parties that are not yet States Parties to the BTWC. We hope that the Implementation Support Unit will inform this meeting of the outcome of its discussions. In regard to CBMs Germany noted that they welcomed the increase in the number of States Parties submitting their annual declarations of Confidence-Building Measures. We hope that this increase is sustainable and that more States Parties will fulfil the CBM obligations that were agreed at the 1986 and 1991 Review Conferences. Although today's figure of 61 States Parties submitting their annual report in 2007 looks impressive, we have to recognize that the number of States Parties has increased along with the median of annual submissions. Consequently, if we count States Parties' participation in the annual CBM exchanges as a percentage instead of in total figures, we have not yet achieved a level far above the 35 percent that has prevailed throughout all the years of the CBM's existence. Germany regrets that at the Sixth Review Conference no progress could be achieved on improving the CBMs. We propose that informal discussions on CBMs should start amongst interested States Parties early enough before the Seventh Review Conference to enable States Parties to develop proposals that can be agreed on at the Seventh Review Conference in 2011.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Germany submitted a CBM in 2007]

The **Netherlands** then spoke about the Implementation Support Unit noting that the ISU was given a specific mandate, its tasks being explicitly enumerated in Para 5 of Part III of the Report of the Review Conference. The European Union welcomed the establishment of the ISU and commends the work the ISU has accomplished already in the six months since its inception. The statement went on to say that bearing in mind the limited number of staff - only three full time officials and financial resources, we believe the ISU should focus on its core tasks, as stipulated by its mandate. Within this mandate, the EU has identified some specific activities that the EU and other regional groupings or States Parties could provide additional funding for. This funding aims at making the most efficient use of the agreed mandate and to help the three-person ISU to fulfil its assigned tasks in an optimum way. The EU non-paper entitled 'Supporting the BTWC ISU', which we present to this MSP (Meeting of the States Parties), provides a list of options States Parties might consider. These are options in the area of implementation, co-operation and assistance, CBMs, universality and outreach. The activities suggested all intend to increase the

effectiveness of the BTWC in a pragmatic way at the working level. The statement concluded by saying We have already made good use of the background papers, compilations and notifications the ISU produced and are looking forward to continue our cooperation with all States Parties and with the ISU, using its full potential.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that the Netherlands submitted a CBM in 2007]

Pakistan then spoke, saying that Pakistan remains committed to strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention including the establishment of a compliance regime through a legally binding instrument. As we await agreement on such a mechanism for verification of faithful and effective compliance of the Convention, national implementation should be enhanced. The statement went on to note that National implementation of the Convention can be enhanced through effective realization of the objectives in Article X of the Convention. International cooperation and transfer of technologies are areas that require attention and that we believe will complement and support national action. Also, enhanced international cooperation in the development of national disease surveillance systems, especially of developing countries, for prevention and control of disease outbreaks will also contribute towards the implementation of the Convention. The statement went on to outline the steps being taken by Pakistan to implement the Convention noting that the Director General dealing with disarmament matters in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been designated as our national focal point for BTWC. All relevant national stakeholders have been notified about the designation of the national focal point and have been requested to provide information on work being done that has relevance to the BTWC. A National Information Database concerning BWC Implementation has been established and is being maintained by the National Focal Point. The National Focal Point holds regular meetings of all stakeholders, on a quarterly basis, to coordinate matters pertaining to BWC implementation. Outreach activities are being gradually expanded to include private sector organizations, academic institutions, industries and other relevant private sector entities. A number of activities have been held for awareness raising regarding the obligations under the Convention. The statement continued by saying that the draft BWC Implementation Legislation, which has been finalized after an intricate inter-departmental process, is now ready for final legal vetting by Ministry of Law before its enactment as law in accordance with national procedures. The statement concluded by observing that the CWC has an elaborate verification mechanism that allowed the OPCW to develop detailed reporting formats. BTWC still awaits agreement in this area. The ISU cannot be expected to undertake reporting tasks similar to the OPCW. The ISU should continue to collate information of expertise available with States Parties.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Pakistan had not submitted a CBM in 2007]

A Signatory State, the **United Arab Emirates** then made a statement saying that they had agreed on 20 November 2007 to ratify this *Biological Weapons Convention* and which was signed in 1972. We are at present carrying out legislative and national steps in order to deposit the documents of ratification. My country is translating the objectives and texts of this *Convention* into national actions in its legislation and systems.

[As the United Arab Emirates are a Signatory State they would not be expected to submit a CBM in 2007]

NGO Informal Session

The Chairman then suspended the formal session and resumed in informal session to hear three further NGOs make short statements in the traditional way to the informal session. Statements were made by:

Trevor Griffiths, Pax Christi International.

Ms. Iris Hunger, Research Group for Biological Arms Control, University of Hamburg.

Ms. Susi Snyder, Secretary General, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

The Chairman then closed the informal session.

General Debate, Tuesday 11 December 2007 afternoon

The General Debate was resumed in the afternoon with the Chairman inviting a further special guest, **Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter**, Director-General of the **OPCW**, to speak. Ambassador Pfirter began his extensive statement by noting that *the BWC and the CWC together constitute a comprehensive prohibition against two of the three categories of weapons of mass destruction. The two instruments represent a most vital advance over the Geneva Protocol of 1925 that prohibited both biological and chemical weapons but fell short of realising its objectives. It is, therefore, incumbent on the international community to ensure that the successor treaties, that represent the essence of tragic historical experiences on the one hand and a resolute determination not to allow those atrocities in the future, must not be allowed to fail. Together they represent a crucial barrier against the use of disease or poison against humanity and are, therefore, worthy of every effort to protect and strengthen the norms that they established. Both in their origin as well as objectives the BWC and the CWC have mutually reinforcing complementarities.* He then pointed out that before describing some of the work of the OPCW that is relevant to *the agenda for this meeting, particularly in terms of national implementation and universality, I wish to stress three points. Firstly, conclusions relating to similarities in the dynamics attending different legal instruments must also take into account the differences between the respective subject-matter that they cover. I trust that in the context of your own endeavours, this has implicitly been recognised in terms of the consensus over the programme of work that you have for the future.*

Secondly, similarities or the differences notwithstanding, treaties are as good as their implementation. And finally, bearing in mind what I have just said, lessons learned in promoting fundamental objectives of one treaty can indeed be of relevance and use in the case of the other even though the paths to implementation may differ. He then went on to give a brief description of the OPCW's activities during its first ten years including destruction and its deadline as well as its work on non-proliferation through its industry verification regime.

Ambassador Pfirter went on to consider the challenge posed by advances in science and technology, saying *there is a growing interest among States Parties as well as academics and NGOs about the impact of science and technology on the relevance of the Convention in the future, particularly in the light of the increasing overlap between the chemical and biological sciences, the integration of chemical engineering into the life sciences, and the impact of micro-reactors and of emerging technologies, such as nanotechnology. On the other hand, these same advances, as well as new or enhanced technologies could be abused for hostile purposes. Changes in chemical manufacturing processes could also represent a risk for the verification regime established under the Convention. In other words, while the disarmament agenda can be more predictable, the nonproliferation aspects of the Convention will face new and unprecedented challenges as the result of rapid progress in science and technology. The main safeguard within the Convention to avoid the possible negative repercussions of the trends of new developments I have just mentioned, is the "General Purpose Criterion", which forbids the use of any toxic chemicals for purposes other than peaceful. At the level of national implementation, as well as when reviewing the impact of new developments on the Convention, it will be important that Member States use this key criterion as provided for in the Convention, as the basis of their assessments.*

He then addressed national implementation, saying that *whilst industry verification is a key instrument of the non-proliferation objective of the Convention, equally indispensable to that end is that States Parties fully implement their Article VII [of the CWC] obligations, establishing and reinforcing the administrative and legislative measures as required under the Convention. Full and effective implementation of the Convention in domestic legal orders is an essential component of the Convention's mechanisms aimed to ensure confidence in compliance. This would seem to be as true for obligations assumed under the BWC as it is in the context of the CWC.* He then went on to describe the programmes that the OPCW carry out to assist their States Parties to build the capacity necessary for effective national implementation. Ambassador Pfirter then described the ongoing activities of the OPCW aimed at achieving universality, noting that there were 40 states not Party in 2003 when the Action Plan was instituted, and today there are only 12 states not Party and this number is continuing to diminish. He pointed out that *in the area of universality as in the case of implementation, OPCW's outreach activities and the support of our States Parties have been crucial in convincing countries of the merits*

of joining the Convention and the tangible contribution they can thus make to strengthening multilateralism, disarmament and nonproliferation and indeed the cause of international peace and security. Our message is rooted in the argument that if peace in the world is a collective responsibility then you cannot stand aside and not be a part of a common quest that is based on principles of equity and non-discrimination and requires for its sustenance the support of each and every member of the international community. As in the case of implementation, we have utilised every opportunity to organize regional workshops, bilateral visits and established contacts at multilateral forums. It is a matter of great satisfaction for me that these efforts have paid rich dividends. He concluded by saying that in the light of the added serious threat posed by the possible use of toxic chemicals by terrorist and other groups or individuals, our outreach activities also include efforts to promote awareness and understanding of the requirements and goals of the Convention amongst the general public, the scientific community, including students, chemists and chemical engineers as well as scientists who are active in the life sciences field. I believe that such activities and the parallel work of the Technical Secretariat can also be usefully complemented by civil society institutions. More concretely, future generations must be made fully aware of their responsibilities as scientists and engineers when dealing with materials that could present a danger to humankind. The CWC sets forth a set of ethical issues relating to the prohibition of chemical weapons and of its humanitarian contents that are of importance to chemists and chemical engineers while performing their professional activities. I continue to stress the need for a stringent code of conduct to ensure the ethical and responsible behaviour of scientists and chemical engineers remains a key requirement for progress in this area. Scientists must establish norms that will stand the test of time and will anchor the chemical weapons ban in the conscience of all those that deal with these materials. I am aware that the need for similar consideration has been highlighted in the case of the BWC. Together with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), the OPCW is pursuing a project in this area. We seek to establish general ethical principles and a code of conduct for the scientific community dealing with chemistry, which should build up on already developed regulations in various relevant areas of science, while at the same time taking into consideration the specific aspects of the Convention.

The Chairman thanked Ambassador Pfirter for his statement, expressing appreciation for his having pointed out the symbiotic relationship between the BWC and CWC and saying that the BWC should take up the offer of learning from the experience of the OPCW. He then invited delegations to ask questions or make observations. Argentina and Germany both took the opportunity to make contributions. **Argentina** expressed their appreciation for the efforts that Ambassador Pfirter had made in regard to universalization and to national implementation of the CWC. The practice of exchanging information between the BWC and the CWC and between the OPCW and the ISU was mutually beneficial and reinforcing. **Germany** noted

that some 6 weeks earlier in the First Committee meetings in New York, it had been noted that the CWC specifically includes ricin and saxitoxin in their schedules and the CWC is thus relevant to toxins. It was therefore very useful to have the OPCW present at the Meeting of States Parties. Germany also thanked the Director-General and the OPCW for having allowed the ISU to be present at the recent meeting of the CWC National Authorities thus facilitating contact with States Parties to the CWC who are not Parties to the BWC. There is a clear synergy between the two organizations. In response to a further query from the Chairman, **Ambassador Pfirter** said that in preparation for the Second CWC Review Conference, plans were being made for a special session for consultation with chemical industry as it was recognized that industry needed to become aware of the verification regime and there needed to be a continuous interaction with the industry.

The chairman then closed the General Debate and resumed in private session to address Agenda Item 6 – ‘Consideration of ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions’.

Two further statements for the General Debate were made by States Parties later in the week. **Georgia** made its statement during the private session on Tuesday 11 December 2007 that said *Georgia has made steps towards working out ways of implementation of BTWC statements. Particularly, new legislation on biosafety/biosecurity is drafted, and, partly adopted. New Georgian Law on Public Health deals with EDPs [especially dangerous pathogens] and surveillance issues.* The statement went on to describe the tremendous support Georgia has received from the United States and the work that is ongoing on Biological Weapons and Infrastructure Elimination in regard to a facility at Tabakhmela, Georgia, known as Biokombinat, which had been a leading FMD vaccine production facility in the era of the Soviet Union, and which stood on a large piece of land with several multi-storey production facilities.

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that Georgia submitted a CBM in 2007]

The **Ukraine** made its statement during the private session on Wednesday 12 December 2007, saying that *during the last decade the world was the stage of important developments in political, social and economic spheres. Currently, we witness significant achievements in biotechnology and molecular biology. At the same time, today, the biological terrorism, natural and technologically induced emergency situation caused by the release of biological hazardous agents represent a real threat to the life on our planet. In this regard, stricter national implementation of the BTWC is crucially important in the international endeavors for a safer world. Unfortunately, the present situation with adoption of the BTWC implementing legislation at the national level is far from being satisfactory. Therefore, creation of effective mechanisms facilitating introduction by the States Parties*

of the national implementing legislation and appropriate administrative measures according to the BTWC are very important. The statement concluded by saying that *Ukraine considers expert level meetings and meetings of States Parties to be effective tools for improving the Convention. We also believe that after suspension of negotiations on the elaboration of verification protocol to the BTWC such meetings represent considerable step towards strengthening the Convention and further joint search for concrete ways for improvement of its regime which will allow us to meet adequately new challenges and threats.*

[www.unog/bwc accessed on 18 January 2008 shows that the Ukraine submitted a CBM in 2007]

In addition, a statement was made at the start of the session on Wednesday 12 December 2007 by Jan-Peter Paul, Counsellor of the **European Commission** on the Commission's Green Paper on Bio-Preparedness. This paper is intended to address all hazards: terrorist attacks, intentional releases, accidentally occurring diseases and naturally occurring diseases. The intention is to build on existing instruments in the fields of human health, animal health, plant health and food safety and existing experience in crisis management whether related to food, plant health or animal health. The objective of the Bio-Preparedness Green Paper adopted by the European Commission on 11 July 2007 is to deal with multiple outbreaks by using existing tools, coordinating response, improving contingency plans, increasing coordination and further developing international cooperation. The Green Paper is available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0399:FIN:EN:PDF>

Industry Informal Session

The fourth day, Thursday 13 December 2007, of the Meeting of States Parties started with a further informal session in which there was a round table discussion with representatives from industry on "*The Role of Commercial Industry in Supporting Effective National Implementation of the BWC*". On this occasion, the participants sat on either side of the Chairman at his usual position on the podium. This was an improvement over the arrangement for the round table discussion with the NGOs which had taken place round a table in the body of the room which was not readily visible to the delegations and from which the participants had only a limited view of delegations. The four participants made statements in the following order:

Terence Taylor, Director, International Council for the Life Sciences.

Dr. Leila Leila Macedo Oda, President, National Biosafety Association of Brazil.

Heinz Schwer, Chief Executive Officer, Sloning BioTechnology GmbH, Germany.

Rainer Wessel, Chief Executive Officer, Ganymed Pharmaceuticals AG, Germany.

This was then followed by a discussion in which delegations asked questions and made observations.

Outcome of the Meeting of States Parties

As already noted, the Meeting of States Parties continued in closed session after the statement by Ambassador Pfrtner of the OPCW on the afternoon of Tuesday 11 December 2007. In accordance with the programme of work (MSP/2007/2) Tuesday's discussions were on the first topic: *Consideration of ways and means to enhance national implementation* and these discussions continued during the morning of the third day, Wednesday. During the latter part of Wednesday, discussion moved on to the second topic: *Consideration of regional and sub-regional cooperation on implementation of the Convention.*

During the Meeting of States Parties, 11 Working Papers were submitted: one by Germany (WP. 1), five by the EU (WP. 2 to WP. 6), one by Brazil (WP. 7), one by Nigeria (WP. 8), one by Cuba on behalf of the NAM (WP. 9), one by the Latin American states (WP. 10) and one by Switzerland (WP. 11). The German working paper addressed the databases planned by international organizations to collect and store any information linked to illegal or alleged illegal biological activities, including hoaxes, as well as accidental and unusual outbreaks of diseases. It is pointed out that the value of such databases is limited if steps are not taken to determine which incidents are real as there will be many more hoaxes, as well as accidental or unusual outbreaks that are not the result of deliberate action. The EU working papers address Legal Implementation and Enforcement (WP. 2), Supporting the BTWC Implementation Support Unit (WP. 3), La Soumission des Mesures de Confiance (MDC) [The Submission of Confidence-Building Measures] (WP. 4), Assistance and Cooperation in the Framework of the Implementation and Universalization of the BTWC (WP. 5), Assistance Activities for Implementing BTWC Legislation in Peru (WP. 6) – (submitted by the European Union and Peru). The Brazilian working paper (WP. 7) described Brazil's National Program for the Promotion of Dialogue between the Private Sector and the Government in matters related to Sensitive Assets (PRONABENS) and the Nigerian working paper (WP. 8) addressed the Nigerian Experience of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The working paper (WP. 9) submitted by Cuba presented a Proposal for Improving National Implementation of the Convention and Regional and Sub-Regional Cooperation in which nine concrete proposals were put forward. The working paper (WP. 10) submitted by the a group of Latin-American states addressed National Implementation of the Convention in All Its Aspects as well as on International, Regional, Sub-Regional and Bilateral Cooperation. The working paper submitted by Switzerland (WP. 11) addressed National Data Collection Processes for CBM Submissions. This paper notes that *the BTWC Sixth Review Conference agreed that implementation of the CBMs merits further and comprehensive attention at the Seventh Review Conference in 2011. A central concern relates to the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data submitted. To improve the quality of the data submitted it is fundamentally important to understand the particular challenges and needs arising in different national contexts and how this impacts on CBM submissions. In order to assist such a dialogue, Switzerland has asked experts to deliver quantitative and qualitative data on the CBM*

completion process. The paper concludes that *there is a genuine willingness by collators to help other collators, both those in States starting the process for the first time and those in States which have been submitting returns for some time but who may have specific questions on ways to improve the data collection process. States Parties should engage in a dialogue on different ways to strengthen the Confidence Building Measures. The results of this study could serve as an element for consideration for such a dialogue on the future of the CBMs.*

Universalisation

The afternoon of the fourth day (Thursday 13 December 2007) of the Meeting of States Parties saw consideration being given to agenda item 8: *Reports from the Chairman and States Parties on universalization activities.* The Chairman introduced his report on universalization (MSP/2007/4) and noted that he had put considerable time and effort into promoting universalization saying that *I have written several times to the Foreign Ministers of states not currently party to the BWC, urging them to accede at the earliest possible opportunity. I have written similar letters to the Foreign Ministers of all of the signatory states, requesting that they too consider ratifying the Convention as soon as possible.* He went on to say that he had followed this up by meetings with representatives of States not party in the margins of the First Committee in New York and also in Geneva. As a result, he was pleased to say that *during the 12 months since we dedicated ourselves to concerted efforts to universalize the BWC, four States have joined the BWC: Gabon, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, and Trinidad and Tobago.* In addition, he said that *there are five states in which accession or ratification processes are well advanced: Burundi, Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique and Myanmar.* In addition, *a further eight states have indicated that they have started the accession or ratification process but that their efforts are not quite so fully developed. These are Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Namibia, Nepal, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia.* He then went to say that *there is another group of states that have not yet started the ratification or accession process, in many cases because waiting for further information or assistance, or because the issue does not have a high enough priority. These are Angola, Central African Republic, Chad, Cook Islands, Guyana, Liberia, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, and Niue. For the most part, these states noted the information we provided and said that it would be sent on to capital. Many of these states indicated that they would need assistance to undertake any commitment towards the BWC.* He went on to encourage all of the States Parties gathered here, as well as those unable to attend this meeting, to see if you can locate any capacity to provide such assistance. *In line with my theme for this week – from adjacency to synergy – I would encourage you to get in touch with the ISU to discuss these matters further but at least keep the Unit informed of what assistance you can, or are providing.* He also noted that *three states (Egypt, Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic) have all provided information indicating that because of particular regional*

security circumstances, no action on ratification should be expected in the near future. While these states have said that they will be unlikely to join the BWC soon, they all, individually, indicated that they supported the aims and objectives of the Convention. The Chairman also said that *perhaps the clearest indicator that we still have work to do and that we must work harder and more effectively in pursuit of universality comes from the eight states for which we still lack information. We have not received any information or feedback from Djibouti, Eritrea, Haiti, Kiribati, Mauritania, Samoa, Somalia, or Tuvalu.* He concluded by making some comments on what he thought should be the next steps towards universality, whether by the next Chairman or by States Parties or others.

Report of the Implementation Support Unit

After consideration of universalisation, the Meeting of States Parties moved on to consider agenda item 9: *Report of the Implementation Support Unit (including report on participation in the confidence-building measures).* As noted earlier, the report of the ISU in BWC/MSP/2007/3 had been issued prior to the Meeting of States Parties. This report, in accordance with the mandate given by the Sixth Review Conference to the ISU:

5. Taking into account the importance of providing administrative support to meetings agreed by the Review Conference as well as comprehensive implementation and universalization of the Convention and the exchange of confidence-building measures, the Conference decides that an "Implementation Support Unit" (ISU) shall be established ...

described progress under the four headings: *II. Administrative support for the Convention; III. Implementation of the Convention; IV. Confidence-Building Measures and V. Promotion of Universalization.* One of the working papers addressed the ISU whilst two addressed CBMs.

Draft Final Report

On Thursday 13 December 2007, the Chairman circulated a first draft of the procedural elements of the final report and also a first draft of the substantive elements. The draft of the procedural elements was based on what had appeared in previous reports of Meeting of States Parties. The first draft of the substantive elements comprised 11 paragraphs as follows:

18. Having considered ways and means to enhance national implementation of the Convention and recognising the need to take into account their respective national circumstances and legal and constitutional processes and to promote the development of biological science and technology for peaceful purposes, the States Parties agreed on the fundamental importance of translating the obligations of the Convention into effective national measures. The States Parties further agreed on the need to manage, coordinate, enforce and regularly review the operation of these measures to ensure their effectiveness.

19. *The States Parties recognised the value of ensuring that such measures:*
- (a) *criminalize, and specify penalties for, activity that breaches of any of the prohibitions of the Convention, and are sufficient for prosecuting unauthorised activities;*
 - (b) *prohibit assisting, encouraging or inducing others to breach any of the prohibitions of the Convention;*
 - (c) *are not limited to enacting relevant laws, but also strengthen national capacities, including the development of necessary human and technological resources;*
 - (d) *avoid hampering the economic and technological development of States Parties, or international cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of biological science and technology.*
20. *Recognising that an effective system of export/import controls, adapted to national circumstances and regulatory systems, is an integral part of effective national implementation, States Parties agreed on the value of establishing and maintaining appropriate licensing procedures for transfers, including flexible and regularly updated lists of relevant agents and toxins, and related items as appropriate, to be subject to licensing, as well as procedures for the safety and security of transport of transferred material, and to ensure transferred material arrives only at the intended destination.*
21. *Recognising the importance of developing a coordinated and harmonised domestic mechanism to implement the obligations of the Convention, the States Parties agreed on the value of moving from **adjacency** to **synergy** by promoting cooperation and coordination among domestic agencies, of clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each, and of raising awareness of the Convention among all relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, government, science, industry, and the public in general, and improving dialogue and communication among them. The States Parties noted that the establishment of a central authority or lead organisation and the creation of a national implementation plan may be useful in this regard.*
22. *The States Parties agreed on the value of ensuring effective enforcement of their legislative and regulatory measures, including through building capacity to collect evidence, develop early-warning systems, coordinate between relevant agencies, train law-enforcement personnel, and provide enforcement agencies with the necessary scientific and technological support.*
23. *Recognising that implementing the Convention is a continuing process, the States Parties agreed on the importance of regularly reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of their national measures, including by ensuring the continued relevance of their national measures in light of scientific and technological developments; by updating lists of agents and equipment relevant to safety, security and transfer regimes; and by implementing additional measures as required.*
24. *Having considered regional and sub-regional cooperation on implementation of the Convention, the States Parties agreed that such cooperation can complement and reinforce national measures, which remain the obligation of States Parties. In this context, the States Parties agreed on the value of regional and sub-regional efforts to:*
- (a) *develop common approaches to implementing the Convention and provide relevant assistance and support, building upon shared languages and legal traditions where appropriate;*
 - (b) *engage regional resources (such as those concerned with security, public health or agriculture) which may have relevant expertise or technical knowledge;*
 - (c) *include implementation of the Convention on the agendas of regional meetings and activities, including ministerial and high-level regional consultations.*
25. *The States Parties recognised that adequate resources are necessary for pursuing both effective national implementation measures and regional and sub-regional cooperation, and in this context called on States Parties in a position to do so to provide technical assistance and support to States Parties requesting it. The States Parties agreed on the value of making full use of resources and expertise available from other States Parties, the Implementation Support Unit, and international and regional organizations.*
26. *The States Parties agreed on the value of promoting international cooperation at all levels, in order to exchange experiences and best practices on the implementation of the Convention. To facilitate the sharing information on national implementation and regional cooperation, States Parties are urged to nominate a national point of contact in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference, and to inform the Implementation Support Unit of their national measures, any updates or changes to them, and any relevant regional or sub-regional activities.*
27. *The States Parties further considered that in pursuing the above understandings and actions, States Parties could, according to their respective circumstances, take into account the considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions made by delegations on the topic under discussion at the Meeting of Experts, as contained in Annex I of the Report of the Meeting of Experts (BWC/MSP/2007/MX/3), as well as the synthesis of these considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals contained in BWC/MSP/2007/L. 1, which is attached to this report as Annex I. The States Parties noted that this annex was not agreed upon and consequently has no formal status.*

28. States Parties are encouraged to inform the Seventh Review Conference of, *inter alia*, any actions, measures or other steps that they may have taken on the basis of the discussions at the 2007 Meeting of Experts and the outcome of the 2007 Meeting of States Parties, in order to facilitate the Seventh Review Conference's consideration of the work and outcome of these meetings and its decision on any further action, in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference (BWC/CONF.VI/6, Part III, paragraph 7 (e)).

A further draft of the substantive paragraphs was issued on the final morning, Friday 14 December 2007, which was contained various changes from the first draft. The changes are indicated in the version provided below:

18. Having considered ways and means to enhance national implementation of the Convention and recognising the need to take into account their respective national circumstances and legal and constitutional processes ~~and to promote the development of biological science and technology for peaceful purposes~~, the States Parties agreed on the fundamental importance of **effective national measures in implementing** ~~of translating~~ the obligations of the Convention ~~into effective national measures~~. The States Parties further agreed on the need to **nationally** manage, coordinate, enforce and regularly review the operation of these measures to ensure their effectiveness. **It was recognised that full implementation of all the provisions of the Convention should facilitate economic and technological development and international cooperation in the field of peaceful biological activities.**

19. The States Parties recognised the value of ensuring that ~~such~~ **national implementation** measures:

- (a) criminalize, and specify penalties for, activity that breaches of any of the prohibitions of the Convention, and are sufficient for prosecuting unauthorised activities;
- (b) prohibit assisting, encouraging or inducing others to breach any of the prohibitions of the Convention;
- (c) are not limited to enacting relevant laws, but also strengthen **their** national capacities, including the development of necessary human and technological resources;
- (d) avoid hampering the economic and technological development of States Parties, or international cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of biological science and technology.

20. Recognising that an effective system of export/import controls, adapted to national circumstances and regulatory systems, is an integral part of effective national implementation, States Parties agreed on the value of establishing and maintaining appropriate licensing procedures for transfers, including flexible and regularly updated lists of relevant agents and toxins, and related items as appropriate, to be subject to licensing, as well as procedures for the safety and security of transport of transferred material **to its** ;

~~and to ensure transferred material arrives only at the intended destination.~~

21. Recognising the importance of developing a coordinated and harmonised domestic mechanism to implement the obligations of the Convention, the States Parties agreed on the value of moving from **adjacency** to **synergy** by promoting cooperation and coordination among domestic agencies, of clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each, and of raising awareness of the Convention among all relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, government, science, industry, and the public in general, and improving dialogue and communication among them. The States Parties noted that the establishment of a central authority or lead organisation and the creation, **as appropriate**, of a national implementation plan may be useful in this regard.

22. The States Parties agreed on the value of ensuring effective enforcement of their legislative and regulatory measures, including through building capacity to collect evidence, **to** develop early-warning systems, **to** coordinate between relevant agencies, **to** train law-enforcement personnel, and **to** provide enforcement agencies with the necessary scientific and technological support.

23. Recognising that implementing the Convention is a continuing process, the States Parties agreed on the importance of regularly **national** ~~reviewings of the adopted measures~~ ~~the efficiency and effectiveness of their national measures~~, including by ensuring the continued relevance of their national measures in light of scientific and technological developments; by updating lists of agents and equipment relevant to safety, security and transfer regimes; and by implementing additional measures as required.

24. Having considered regional and sub-regional cooperation on implementation of the Convention, the States Parties agreed that such cooperation can complement and reinforce national measures, which remain the obligation of States Parties. In this context, the States Parties agreed on the value of regional and sub-regional efforts to:

- (a) develop common approaches to implementing the Convention and provide relevant assistance and support, building upon shared languages and legal traditions where appropriate;
- (b) engage regional resources (such as those concerned with **security police, customs, public health or agriculture**) which may have relevant expertise or technical knowledge;
- (c) include implementation of the Convention on the agendas of regional meetings and activities, including, **as appropriate**, ministerial and high-level regional consultations.

25. The States Parties recognised that adequate resources are necessary for pursuing both effective national implementation measures and regional and sub-

regional cooperation, and in this context called on States Parties in a position to do so to provide technical assistance and support to States Parties requesting it. **In this context, the States Parties agreed on the value of the Implementation Support Unit, and of making full use of resources and expertise available from other States Parties, the Implementation Support Unit, and international and regional organizations.**

26. The States Parties agreed on the value of promoting international cooperation at all levels, in order to exchange experiences and best practices on the implementation of the Convention. To facilitate the sharing of information on national implementation and regional cooperation, States Parties are urged to nominate a national point of contact in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference, and to inform the Implementation Support Unit of their national measures; **and any updates or changes to them (for example, through the submission of confidence-building measures), and of any relevant regional or sub-regional activities.**

27. The States Parties further considered that in pursuing the above understandings and actions, States Parties could, according to their respective circumstances, take into account the considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions made by delegations on the topic under discussion at the Meeting of Experts, as contained in Annex I of the Report of the Meeting of Experts (BWC/MSP/2007/MX/3), as well as the synthesis of these considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals contained in BWC/MSP/2007/L. 1, which is attached to this report as Annex I. The States Parties noted that this annex was not agreed upon and consequently has no formal status.

28. States Parties are encouraged to inform the Seventh Review Conference of, **inter alia**, any actions, measures or other steps that they may have taken on the basis of the discussions at the 2007 Meeting of Experts and the outcome of the 2007 Meeting of States Parties, in order to facilitate the Seventh Review Conference's consideration of the work and outcome of these meetings and its decision on any further action, in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference (BWC/CONF.VI/6, Part III, paragraph 7 (e)).

Another version, the third draft, of the substantive paragraphs was issued at the end of the final morning, Friday 14 December 2007, which was contained some changes from the second draft; in particular, the substance of the previous paragraph 20 was subsumed into a new sub-paragraph to paragraph 19. The changes are indicated in the version provided below:

18. Having considered ways and means to enhance national implementation of the Convention and recognising the need to take into account their

respective national circumstances and legal and constitutional processes, the States Parties agreed on the fundamental importance of effective national measures in implementing the obligations of the Convention. The States Parties further agreed on the need to nationally manage, coordinate, enforce and regularly review the operation of these measures to ensure their effectiveness. It was recognised that full implementation of all the provisions of the Convention should facilitate economic and technological development and international cooperation in the field of peaceful biological activities.

19. The States Parties recognised the value of ensuring that national implementation measures:

- (a) ~~criminalize~~ **penalize and prevent activities**, and specify penalties for, activity that breaches of any of the prohibitions of the Convention, and are sufficient for prosecuting unauthorised activities;
- (b) prohibit assisting, encouraging or inducing others to breach any of the prohibitions of the Convention;
- (c) are not limited to enacting relevant laws, but also strengthen their national capacities, including the development of necessary human and technological resources;
- (d) **include an effective system of export/import controls, adapted to national circumstances and regulatory systems;**
- (e) ~~avoid hampering the economic and technological development of States Parties, or international cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of biological science and technology.~~

~~20. Recognising that an effective system of export/import controls, adapted to national circumstances and regulatory systems, is an integral part of effective national implementation, States Parties agreed on the value of establishing and maintaining appropriate licensing procedures for transfers, including flexible and regularly updated lists of relevant agents and toxins, and related items as appropriate, to be subject to licensing, as well as procedures for the safety and security of transport of transferred material to its intended destination.~~

21. Recognising the importance of developing a coordinated and harmonised domestic mechanism to implement the obligations of the Convention, the States Parties agreed on the value of moving from **adjacency to synergy, with their governments taking the lead** by promoting cooperation and coordination among domestic agencies, of clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each, and of raising awareness of the Convention among all relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, ~~government, science~~ **the scientific community**, industry, **academia, media** and the public in general, and improving dialogue and communication among them. The States Parties noted that, **where appropriate**, the establishment of a central **body authority** or lead organisation and the creation, ~~as appropriate~~, of a national implementation plan may be useful in this regard.

22. *The States Parties agreed on the value of ensuring effective enforcement of their legislative and regulatory measures, including through building capacity to collect evidence, to develop early-warning systems, to coordinate between relevant agencies, to train law-enforcement personnel, and to provide enforcement agencies with the necessary scientific and technological support.*
23. *Recognising that implementing the Convention is a continuing process, the States Parties agreed on the importance of regular national reviews of the adopted measures, including by ensuring the continued relevance of their national measures in light of scientific and technological developments; by updating lists of agents and equipment relevant to safety, security and transfer regimes; and by implementing additional measures as required.*
24. *Having considered regional and sub-regional cooperation on implementation of the Convention, the States Parties agreed that such cooperation can complement and reinforce national measures, which remain the obligation of States Parties. In this context, the States Parties agreed on the value of regional and sub-regional efforts to, **where appropriate**:*
- (a) develop common approaches to implementing the Convention and provide relevant assistance and support, building upon shared languages and legal traditions where appropriate;*
 - (b) engage regional resources (such as those concerned with police, customs, public health or agriculture) which may have relevant expertise or technical knowledge;*
 - (c) include implementation of the Convention on the agendas of regional meetings and activities, including, ~~as appropriate~~, ministerial and high-level regional consultations.*
25. *The States Parties recognised that adequate resources are necessary for pursuing both effective national implementation measures and regional and sub-regional cooperation, and in this context called on States Parties in a position to do so to provide technical assistance and support to States Parties requesting it. In this context, the States Parties agreed on the value of the Implementation Support Unit, and of making full use of resources and expertise available from other States Parties; and **relevant** international and regional organizations.*
26. *The States Parties agreed on the value of promoting international cooperation at all levels, in order to exchange experiences and best practices on the implementation of the Convention. To facilitate the sharing of information on national implementation and regional cooperation, States Parties are urged to nominate a national point of contact in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference, and to inform the Implementation Support Unit of their national measures and any updates or changes to them (for example, through the submission of confidence-*
- building measures), and of any relevant regional or sub-regional activities.*
27. *The States Parties further considered that in pursuing the above understandings and actions, States Parties could, according to their respective circumstances **and constitutional and legal processes**, take into account the considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions made by delegations on the topic under discussion at the Meeting of Experts, as contained in Annex I of the Report of the Meeting of Experts (BWC/MSP/2007/MX/3), as well as the synthesis of these considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals contained in BWC/MSP/2007/L. 1, which is attached to this report as Annex I. ~~The States Parties noted that T~~this annex was not **discussed or** agreed upon and consequently has no **format** status.*
28. *States Parties are encouraged to inform the Seventh Review Conference of, **inter alia**, any actions, measures or other steps that they may have taken on the basis of the discussions at the 2007 Meeting of Experts and the outcome of the 2007 Meeting of States Parties, in order to facilitate the Seventh Review Conference's consideration of the work and outcome of these meetings and its decision on any further action, in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference (BWC/CONF.VI/6, Part III, paragraph 7 (e)).*

Final Report

The Meeting of States Parties met for the final time on the afternoon on Friday 14 December 2007 and at that session agreed their final report, issued as BWC/MSP/2007/5. The substantive paragraphs were unchanged from those in the third draft issued at the end of the morning of Friday 14 December 2007. In addition, to these substantive paragraphs as indicated above, the final report contained a paragraph on universalisation and another on the Implementation Support Unit:

29. *The Meeting of States Parties reviewed progress towards obtaining universality for the Convention and considered the Report from the Chairman on Universalization Activities (BWC/MSP/2007/4), as well as reports from States Parties on their activities to promote universalization. The States Parties reaffirmed the particular importance of the ratification of the Convention by Signatory States and accession to the Convention without delay by those which have not signed the Convention contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention. In this context, the Meeting took note of the reports, and called on all States Parties to continue to promote universalization, and to support the universalization activities of the Chairman and the Implementation Support Unit, in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference.*

30. *The Meeting of States Parties also considered the Report of the Implementation Support Unit (BWC/MSP/2007/3), including the report on participation in the confidence-building measures (CBMs). The Meeting took note of the Report, and welcomed the fact that 61 States Parties had so far submitted a CBM report in 2007, the highest number yet. The Meeting called on States Parties to continue working closely with the Implementation Support Unit in fulfilling its mandate, in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference.*

Final Session

The final session also saw the nomination by the Eastern Group of Ambassador Georgi Avramchev of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia as the Chairman for the Meeting of Experts on 18 to 22 August 2008 and the Meeting of States Parties on 1 to 5 December 2008. The two topics to be considered in 2008 are:

1. *National, regional and international measures to improve biosafety and biosecurity, including laboratory safety and security of pathogens and toxins.*
2. *Oversight, education, awareness raising, and adoption and/or development of codes of conduct with the aim of preventing misuse in the context of advances in bio-science and bio-technology research with the potential of use for purposes prohibited by the Convention.*

Ambassador Avramchev thanked the States Parties for endorsing the proposal of the Eastern Group that he should be Chairman of the meetings in 2008 and said that *in the months to come, in consultations with the Delegations of the States parties, and with the assistance of the Implementation Support Unit, I would prepare a more detailed agenda on the topics of the meetings.*

The Chairman, Ambassador Khan, then closed the Meeting of States Parties by making some concluding remarks. He started by saying *I think we have had a very productive meeting, and have at least made a good start on our goal of moving from adjacency to synergy in our efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention, in the areas we have been looking at of enhancing national implementation and regional and sub-regional cooperation. We heard the views from the highest levels of the organisations with which we must work ever more closely to achieve our shared objectives: the WHO, FAO, OIE, Interpol and the OPCW. We had innovative interactive discussions with civil society and industry representatives, and the feedback I have had so far indicates that States Parties found this interaction highly relevant and useful. I encourage you to continue to explore ways to integrate the knowledge, perspectives and expertise of these actors into our work next year.* He went on to say that *most importantly, we had very substantive, constructive and highly-focused contributions from the States Parties. The atmosphere of collaboration, creativity, quiet determination, and mutual support and respect was most impressive - and to anyone who witnessed BWC*

dealings five years ago, utterly extraordinary. And this atmosphere is reflected in the report we have just adopted. It is a substantive outcome. I said at the beginning of our meeting that our yardstick for measuring success should be: "will this report be a useful, practical tool for governments wanting to improve their implementation of the BWC?" I think that it will. He then added that *the report records in concise and accessible terms the measures and actions which States Parties consider important for effective national implementation and regional cooperation. The annex provides a further resource, listing ideas and options that States Parties might find useful. Importantly, I think our report will a very helpful guide for those States Parties which were unable to participate in our meetings this year, and I encourage delegations to bring this report to the attention of relevant colleagues and officials in those countries. I am also pleased with the results of our universalization efforts, and with the work of the ISU. Both these outcomes of the Review Conference have more than proved their worth, and I strongly encourage States Parties to continue to give every support to universalization activities and the work of the ISU. Next year, we will move on, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Avramchev, to consider the topics of biosafety and biosecurity, and education and awareness-raising. These are challenging, complex topics, but I am sure that working in the same spirit we have shown this year, we will again have a productive outcome that genuinely improves the implementation of the Convention and reduces the risks of biological weapons being developed, acquired or used.* He then concluded by saying that *all our achievements over the past two years are due to the collective decision of the States Parties that the Biological Weapons Convention was too important to abandon to political paralysis and infighting. You have worked with determination, resourcefulness and flexibility to overcome or work around your differences, and find solid, common ground on which to march forward in unison against the terrible threat posed by biological weapons. This is a highly significant achievement, especially in view of the divisions of the past, and the difficult circumstances surrounding so much of the wider multilateral disarmament agenda.*

The Meeting was then closed.

Reflections

The Meeting of States Parties had an even better participation than the Meeting of Experts with over 510 participants from 95 States Parties, 6 Signatory States and 2 States not Party of which 426 came from States Parties including some 188 participants from capitals. This was about 100 more than at the Meeting of Experts in August 2007 when there were over 410 participants including over 160 from capitals. It was good that the JACKSNNZ group (Japan, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand) were able to resume the practice that they had successfully adopted at the Sixth Review Conference of having a group statement.

It is, however, noted that 7 States Parties (Cuba (on behalf of the NAM), Iran, India, Morocco, Russia, Algeria and

Pakistan) out of the 26 who made statements in the General Debate referred to the importance of a legally binding compliance mechanism. Although this topic will not be considered again until the Seventh Review Conference in 2011, it should be recognized that it will then be over 10 years since the negotiations ceased and there will need to be a new look at how to strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention. Bradford Review Conference Paper No. 20 (at <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/sbtwc>) of November 2007 indicates what needs to be done to make progress in this area.

A useful innovation was the participation at the highest level of special guests from the WHO, FAO, OIE, Interpol and the OPCW who each spoke about the synergy that existed between their organizations and the States Parties of the BWC. Although the opportunity to ask questions and make observations was only taken up after the WHO and the OPCW presentations, it is probable that if this is repeated at the Meeting of States Parties in 2008, there will be much more debate and value gained from such high level participation.

Another welcome innovation was the round-table discussion with six representatives of civil society on the afternoon of Monday 10 December and with four representatives of industry on the morning of Thursday 13 December. There was useful discussion during both of these round-tables which helped to demonstrate that both civil society and industry are stakeholders who have a common goal with the States Parties – all wish to see the Convention strengthened and there are real benefits in extending participation in the Meetings of the States Parties so that contributions can be made by these stakeholders. There can only be benefits for all concerned by allowing those who have demonstrated a constructive and careful approach to the common goal – of achieving a safer and more secure world with a strengthened Convention – to be present throughout much more of the meeting than is currently the case, as such participation will ensure that civil society and industry are more aware of the realities of multilateral diplomacy and thus enable them to propose more realistic solutions in the future.

The general climate at the Meeting of States Parties was generally very positive and constructive – partially because everyone present knew the ways in which Ambassador Khan as Chairman would seek to find common ground acceptable to all. As should be expected, the outcome as recorded in the substantive paragraphs in the Final Report is much more focused than the outcome of the Meeting of States Parties in 2003. However, in the light of the OPCW experience on national implementation of the CWC, it is regretted that the opportunity was not taken to seek to engender a greater sense

of urgency, and to inspire all States Parties to improve their national implementation and report progress thereon before the Seventh Review Conference. Nevertheless, the States Parties are urged to *inform the Implementation Support Unit of their national measures and any updates or changes to them (for example, through the submission of confidence-building measures), and of any relevant regional or sub-regional activities*, and it can therefore be expected that the ISU will in their subsequent annual reports provide an account of progress under *item III: Implementation of the Convention*, and that they may provide, in a similar way to that in which they have reported on CBMs, a summary appreciation of progress in respect of national implementation.

The www.unog.ch/bwc website created by the ISU is proving to be a very useful website. They are to be complimented on posting the statements by States Parties in the order in which they are presented to the Meeting of States Parties, thereby providing a much more valuable resource for the future than the alternative of an alphabetical listing which ignores the reality that what is said by a later speaker is frequently influenced by what has been said by an earlier one. It would be helpful if the [unog.ch/bwc](http://www.unog.ch/bwc) website were to adopt this practice of following the actual sequence in which statements are made throughout.

In looking ahead to the Meeting of Experts and the Meeting of States Parties in 2008, the appointment of Ambassador Georgi Avramchev as Chairman is welcomed, although it is regretted that the opportunity was not taken at the Meeting of States Parties in December 2007 to enable the new Chairman to set out his approach to the topics for 2008 so that the States Parties could start their preparation instead of having to wait until they receive a letter sometime in 2008.

Nevertheless, overall the Meeting of States Parties had a successful outcome that continued the momentum created by the successful outcome of the Sixth Review Conference. Useful innovations were made in which special guests at the highest level from the WHO, FAO, OIE, Interpol and the OPCW addressed the Meeting of States Parties and responded to subsequent questions, and two round-table discussions were held with representatives of civil society and of industry. As the Chairman said, a useful step forward from adjacency to synergy was made in these innovations.

This review was written by Graham S. Pearson, HSP Advisory Board.