

**REPORT FROM GENEVA: THE
BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS
CONVENTION MEETING OF
EXPERTS AUGUST 2015**

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October 2015

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Report from Geneva: The Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of Experts August 2015

by Graham S. Pearson[†] in association with Nicholas A. Sims^{*}

Introduction

As recorded in *Review no. 35* (March 2012), the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) held in Geneva from Monday 5 December to Thursday 22 December 2011 agreed an Intersessional Programme for 2012-2015. *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations of the Final Document* of the Seventh Review Conference stated that:

The Conference decides that the following topics shall be Standing Agenda Items, which will be addressed at meetings of both the Meeting of Experts and Meeting of States Parties in every year from 2012–2015:

(a) Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X;

(b) Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention;

(c) Strengthening national implementation.

9. The Conference decides that the following other items will be discussed during the intersessional programme in the years indicated:

(a) How to enable fuller participation in the CBMs (2012 and 2013);

(b) How to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties (2014 and 2015).

At the Meeting of States Parties in December 2014, as reported in *Report 41* (March 2015), the arrangements for the Meeting of Experts and Meeting of States Parties in 2014 were considered. The Meeting decided that the Meeting of Experts would be held on 10 to 14 August 2015, and the Meeting of States Parties on 14 to 18 December 2015. The meeting approved the nomination by the NAM

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and Other States of Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia as the Chairman for 2015, and the nominations by the Western Group of Mr. Henk Cor van der Kwast, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament and by the Eastern European Group of Mr. György Molnár, Ambassador and Special Representative of the Foreign Minister of Hungary for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, as the two Vice-chairs.

Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia wrote to the States Parties on 11 February 2015 to outline his plans for the Meeting of Experts and the Meeting of States Parties in 2015 saying that *“We are now entering the last year of our 2012-2015 intersessional programme.”* and adding that *“we have developed a sound and practical approach to our mandated task, and our work has been characterized by a sense of trust and common purpose. I intend to continue along this path, maintaining our tried and tested working practices, and to work with States Parties to build on the solid platform we have created together and to create a strong foundation for the Eighth Review Conference.”* He went on to say *“Like Ambassador Schmid, I believe we should continue to give greater focus to the “effective action” part of our mandate. The reports of the 2012, 2013 and 2014 Meetings of States Parties contain a broad range of common understandings, some quite detailed. In 2015, we will continue to discuss, and promote common understandings on the three standing agenda items and the biennial topic. But as we move ever closer to the Eighth Review Conference in 2016, we should continue to turn our attention towards options for promoting effective action. I would therefore invite you to provide your feedback in identifying which areas may be ripe for a greater focus on action, and how such action might be achieved in practical terms, within the limits of our mandate.”*

He then went on to add that: *“The other specific opportunity we have to build on our work is the biennial topic. In 2014, we considered how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties. This is an important topic that is of immediate practical concern to many States Parties. Its relevance has only been further underlined by the recent events in West Africa.”* He also said that *“I also believe it important to continue the effort begun in previous years year to “bring in more voices” to our work, to ensure that our work programme benefits from a broader range of expertise and perspectives and that a larger proportion of States Parties can benefit directly from participation in our work programme. These efforts have yielded positive initial results and should be furthered.*

He then said that *“26 March 2015 sees the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the BWC. This is a significant milestone in the life of the Convention and one which I hope we can use to raise the profile of the Convention and promote its universalization. ... I will keep you informed on any further*

developments but would also welcome any ideas or initiatives you may have to mark this important landmark.

Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia briefed the regional groups on 16 March 2015 when he said that:

As I noted in my letter, we are now entering the last year of our 2012–2015 intersessional programme and I intend to maintain the tried and tested working practices of my predecessors. I want to work with you to build on the solid foundation we have already created together, to create a strong platform for the Eighth Review Conference in 2016.

I am also hopeful that in 2015 we will identify additional common understandings across all three Standing Agenda Items and the biennial topic. I believe we should seize every opportunity on offer.

I believe we should continue to give greater focus to the “effective action” part of our mandate. The reports of the 2012, 2013 and 2014 Meetings of States Parties contain a broad range of common understandings, some quite detailed. As we move ever closer to the Eighth Review Conference, we should continue to turn our attention towards options for promoting effective action, derived from those common understandings.

As mentioned in my letter, on 26 March we will mark the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the BWC. This is a significant milestone in the life of the Convention and one which I hope we can use to raise its profile and promote its universalization.

In regard to **promoting effective action**, he said:

We are now almost through this intersessional work programme. Whilst as I just highlighted, there is still much work to be done in discussion and promotion of common understandings, we must further consider how this translates into effective action in, and between, our countries. In line with the mandate for our work provided by the Seventh Review Conference, we should identify any aspects ripe for the promotion of effective action.

We have a broad range of common understandings already identified by consensus. We have a constructive and collegial atmosphere, and we have our record of success. Like Ambassador Schmid, I would like to link these to effective action. I therefore encourage you in particular to think about ways in which we can turn the common understandings achieved over the previous years into effective action. I, the Vice-Chairs and the ISU stand ready to support you in this important task.

He also spoke about the importance of **bringing in more voices** by saying:

I also believe it is important to continue the effort begun in previous years to "bring in more voices" to our work, to ensure that our work programme benefits from a broader range of expertise and perspectives and that a larger proportion of States Parties can benefit directly from participation in our work programme.

Where they have insights or experience of particular relevance to our efforts, we must continue to bring in the necessary expertise from as many States Parties as possible, from international organizations, and from other bodies.

Having considered the relevant common understandings we have identified in the past, it is clear that there is a desire from States Parties to hear, more clearly, the voices of industry and the private sector. I would appreciate any ideas, suggestions, or additional opportunities that you might bring to my attention.

In regard to the staffing of the ISU he said that *As you are aware, the ISU is currently recruiting its P4 and P3 staff. I understand that the selection process for the P4 post should be completed at the end of April with the new recruit starting thereafter. The selection process for the P3 post should be completed by early May with the new recruit also starting soon thereafter. We should by June have a fully staffed ISU.*

Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia then wrote again to the States Parties on 27 May 2015 saying that *I would like to share with you my current thinking on how best to prepare for the forthcoming Meeting of Experts.* In regard to the **programme of work**, he said that *I remain committed to building upon the solid foundations laid by my predecessors. I am aware of the importance of retaining the correct balance between the various agenda items. The attached provisional programme of work is closely based on that of 2012, 2013 and 2014. It lists the sub-items of the respective Standing Agenda Items, highlighting those which were originally proposed for consideration in 2015 according to my distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Boujemâa Delmi of Algeria in his letter dated 21 June 2012. It also reflects the biennial item we are to consider this year according to the Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference.* He went on to say that *As we did last year, I am proposing that we assign one full day each to the three Standing Agenda Items as I believe this will facilitate the attendance of relevant experts, support a focused and structured discussion and allow us to match side events insofar as possible to the topics of the formal meeting. This means we will split our consideration of the biennial item on how to strengthen implementation of Article VII over two non-consecutive days, as was done last year. I hope that this will allow delegations to reflect on our deliberations in the first session, prior to the second session on this issue. I trust that delegations will*

find this draft programme acceptable and a useful aid for preparations for the meeting.

The **draft provisional programme of work** enclosed with his letter set out the Standing Agenda Items with all the sub-items as listed in the Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference.

In regard to **observers and guests of the meeting**, he said that *In line with past practice, and following feedback and suggestions provided by States Parties, I have compiled the attached provisional list of relevant international organizations, professional and academic associations, and other NGOs and experts who might contribute to our work by sharing their experience and expertise at the Meeting of Experts. In accordance with our established procedures, as a first step I will be writing to the intergovernmental organizations to notify them of the meeting, and will invite the other organizations and experts to participate as guests of the meeting.*

The attached list consisted of the following:

I. United Nations

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee

United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UN ODA)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

[In regard to the comparable list in 2014, CTITF is a new addition]

II. International Organizations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

World Bank

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

[In regard to the comparable list in 2014, IFRC and World Bank are new additions]

III. Guests of the Meeting

A. International professional and scientific organizations

Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)

Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network (DCVMN)

IAP: Global Network of Science Academies

International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA)

[This is the same as the comparable list in 2014]

B. Other organizations and individual experts

Médecins Sans Frontières

Save the Children

International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)

Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC)

Trevor Shoemaker (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Uganda)

Professor Peter Piot (Director of the School and Professor of Global Health,

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

[Only Trevor Shoemaker was on the comparable list in 2014]

[Analysis: Although mention had been made of the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention in the two earlier communications to the States Parties, no mention is made in this letter of 27 May 2015. Our report on the 40th anniversary – *Report from Geneva Review no. 42* is available at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/spru/hsp/Reports%20from%20Geneva/HSP%20Reports%20from%20Geneva%20No.%2042.pdf>]

Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia briefed the regional groups again on 29 June/2 July 2015 when he recalled that in regard to the approach to the work in 2015 he had suggested greater focus needed to be given to the effective action part of our mandate. He said that:

As you are all very aware, the purpose of our intersessional programme is to “to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action” on those issues identified for inclusion by the Seventh Review Conference. Since 2012, we have discussed many issues, and have promoted common understandings on many of them. However, we have been less successful when it comes to the “effective action” part of our mandate.

With the Eighth Review Conference a little over one year away, I believe it is important for us to focus more explicitly on promoting “effective action”. Our deliberations at the Meeting of Experts and particularly at the Meeting of States Parties should be conducted with a view to providing solid input for the Review Conference next year.

Reviewing the reports of previous Meetings of States Parties, it is clear that there are some areas in which effective action can be promoted. I believe it will be important for us to focus on such areas within our mandate for this year with a view to being able to include more concrete and specific language in the report of this year’s Meeting of States Parties.

While promoting effective action is something we can further consider at the Meeting of States Parties, I am raising it now, in order that we can use the available time as constructively as possible.

In regard to the biennial agenda item on strengthening Article VII, he said that:

With respect to the biennial agenda item, our current mandate is “How to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed

procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties". We have firm foundations on which to build and I believe it would be best to continue the efforts States Parties have already begun.

We have already reached a number of relevant agreements at past review conferences, notably at the Seventh Review Conference. There were also relevant common understandings identified during our intersessional work:

- In 2004 we looked at “capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease”;*
- In 2010, we looked at “the provision of assistance and coordination with relevant organizations upon request by any State Party in the case of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons”;*
- And in 2014 we began our exploration of the topic that we will continue to explore this year.*

The report of the 2014 Meeting of States Parties identified five areas in particular for continued discussion this year: [These were then listed]

I believe that these five areas identified by the 2014 Meeting of States Parties for further discussion could provide a useful guide for our deliberations on Article VII this year. We will also need to discuss the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa and its implications for the Convention.

I hope that at the Meeting of States Parties we could then work together to identify options within each of these five areas for promoting “effective action”, particularly with a view to crafting useful input for the Eighth Review Conference next year.

In regard to contributions from guests of the meeting, Mr. Daniel Feakes, Head of the ISU said that *We have since received an additional request from a State Party to include the University of Bradford as a guest of the meeting to brief on issues relating to education.* He went on to add that:

In general, for the standing agenda items, we are proposing that we set aside the first hour and a half of the afternoon session on each topic for contributions by relevant guests. For the biennial item, we are suggesting that we start by hearing what capacity already exists in other forums, and have set aside time to do this at the start of the first session on Monday. We will then revisit this item on Friday morning to focus on the capacity present in States Parties.

Commentary

Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia, the Chair for the Meetings in 2015, in his preparations for the Meeting of Experts in August 2015 made it clear from the outset that he was keen to give greater focus to the **effective action** part of the mandate. He made the point that, as the Eighth Review Conference in 2016 is just over a year away, more attention needs to be given to promoting effective action. He therefore encouraged States Parties to help identify which areas may be ripe for a greater focus on action and also to address how such action might be achieved in practical terms. Although he saw promoting effective action as something to consider further at the Meeting of States Parties, he was raising it now, in order that the available time can be used as constructively as possible.

This emphasis is indeed timely as the Eighth Review Conference is next year and past experience has demonstrated clearly that for proposals for action to attract consensus at the Review Conference they need to have been discussed by States Parties in advance of the Review Conference itself. A new proposal first proposed during the Review Conference itself is unlikely to be agreed.

Further Developments

In July 2015, Graham Pearson, Filippa Lentzos and Nicholas Sims published Bradford Briefing Paper No. 11 entitled *Reviving The Intersessional Process: Achieving Effective Action* (available at http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/sbtwc/briefing/three_bw_briefing.htm). In this, we recognize that it has become increasingly apparent that the current Intersessional Process is no longer being used effectively by the States Parties *to discuss and promote common understandings and effective action* as set out in the mandate agreed by States Parties at the Seventh Review Conference. Consequently we examine the recent Intersessional Process and consider what steps need to be taken by the States Parties at the Eighth Review Conference to create a robust and effective Intersessional Process that will improve implementation of the Convention and strengthen reassurance amongst States Parties that activities are fully consistent with the obligations of the Convention. We go on to set out a potential mandate for the Intersessional Process after the Eighth Review Conference. We encourage States Parties in looking ahead to the Review Conference, to recognise that it is particularly valuable for States Parties to work together to put forward their ideas in Working Papers and other initiatives that are widely sponsored and go beyond the existing Group boundaries. Several Working Papers in the last few years have shown – as might be expected – that many States Parties share common views on how best to move forward and effectively strengthen the implementation of the Convention.

The UN Secretary-General's Mechanism (UNSGM) for investigations of alleged

use is clearly relevant to Articles VI and VII of the Convention. Accreditation of analytical laboratories raises different issues in the context of the BTWC than under the Chemical Weapons Convention but is equally necessary. A workshop entitled *Towards a UNSGM biological analysis network* was held in Stockholm, 16-17 June 2015, by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Defence Research Agency, CBRN Defence and Security. It identified a number of key elements and core issues for continued discussion of the role of biological analytical laboratories in investigations under the UNSGM. A presentation, available on the unog.ch/bwc website, on this workshop was made by Anna-Lena Johansson of Sweden as part of the side event on *The Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged use of Chemical, Biological or Toxin Weapons* at lunchtime on Wednesday 12 August 2015

Following the Chairman's briefing to regional groups on 16 March 2015 (summarised earlier), during which he set out the proposed timetable for selecting P4 and P3 staff members for the Implementation Support Unit in April and May respectively, his expectation that "We should by June have a fully staffed ISU" was not fulfilled. Instead, due to circumstances beyond the control of the ISU, both vacancies remained unfilled at the time of the Meeting of Experts. Efforts to bring the extended recruitment process to a successful conclusion continued through the summer but with no certainty that a fully staffed ISU would be in place by the time of the Meeting of States Parties in December.

Meeting of Experts, 10 to 14 August 2015: Opening Plenary Session

The Meeting of Experts began on Monday 10 August 2015 with Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia in the Chair in a plenary session when he welcomed all those present. He noted that this was the final year of the Intersessional Period before the Eighth Review Conference in 2016. He said he would be following the working practices established by his predecessors at the meetings in 2012, 2013 and 2014 and would aim to make efficient and productive use of the valuable intersessional meeting time and he asked States Parties for their support, cooperation and understanding in achieving this.

Then turning to procedural matters, he noted, in regard to the adoption of the Agenda (Agenda item 2) in BWC/MSP/2015/MX/1 (all official papers are available at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc>), that agenda items 5 to 8 had been taken directly from the text of the report of the Seventh Review Conference that provided the mandate for the Intersessional Period. The Agenda was adopted. Moving on to Agenda item 3 the consideration of the provisional programme of work (BWC/MSP/2015/MX/2/Rev. 1) he noted that this showed the overall structure of the meeting with equal time allocated for each Standing Agenda Item and for the biennial topic. He said that this should be read in conjunction with the rolling indicative schedule available on the ISU website which showed what was planned for each item. This schedule was by no means closed and

he encouraged States Parties to adjust the schedule or to request the floor to make interventions regarding the schedule. He also noted that sessions would be open or closed; open sessions would be open for guests and observers whilst closed sessions would be open to States Parties and Signatory States only. He said that he had received a request from NGOs to make statements and he proposed the inclusion of an informal session for such statements later in the morning. The draft programme was adopted.

The Chair then noted that there were a number of side events and mentioned that there would be a poster session directly outside the conference room on Monday evening from 6.00 pm to 7.30pm following the afternoon session. Such a poster session was very much part of the Meeting of Experts as it provided an excellent opportunity for interaction with outside organizations and experts.

The Chair then said that the Implementation Support Unit had prepared three background papers: BWC/MSP/2015/MX/INF. 2 on previous agreements and understandings under the Convention relevant to strengthening the implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties, BWC/MSP/2015/MX/INF. 3 on Background information on continuing challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange, and BWC/MSP/2015/MX/INF. 4 on international organizations that may be involved in the provision of and coordination of assistance relevant to Article VII.

[It is noted that unlike previous years there was no background paper prepared by the ISU on advances in science and technology related to the Convention. This may well have resulted from the failure to have completed the necessary recruitment by the time of the Meeting of Experts.]

The Chair then considered item 4 of the Agenda on adoption of rules of procedure. He proposed to continue as in 2012, 2013 and 2014 when the rules of procedure of the Seventh Review Conference were adopted *mutatis mutandis*. Formal credentials would not be required as all that was needed was a note verbale to the ISU. The rules of procedure were adopted.

The Chair then went on to speak about participation at the Meeting of Experts. He said that three States, Cote D'Ivoire, Syrian Arab Republic and United Republic of Tanzania, which had signed but not yet ratified the Convention, had requested participation in accordance with the Rules of Procedure 44 para 2, and one State non-Party, Guinea, had requested observer status. This was agreed. He then went on to say that the Meeting of Experts would be addressing a wide range of topics with a broad range of actors. He said that a small number of guests of the meeting had been invited on the initiative of the Chair who would only participate in open sessions. In addition, seven

international organizations had requested observer status: European Union, ICRC, Interpol, IFRC, OPCW, WHO and OIE. This was agreed.

He went on to say that he had had positive results from his request to States Parties to provide sponsorship as this had been provided by Australia, Finland and the Netherlands which had enabled representatives from six States Parties – Burundi, Cameroon, Cuba, Mongolia, Philippines and Sudan – to participate. Some other representatives were attending under bilateral arrangements. He commended States Parties in a position to sponsor participation to do so as it made a very real difference.

The Chair said that this completed the formalities and he now proposed to move on to any introductory statements which would then be followed by the statements by NGOs. Following that he would then move on to the Agenda items. He said that he encouraged States Parties to ask questions after each presentation. He asked that because of time constraints, any statements be limited to no more than 5 minutes and any presentations to 15 minutes so as to ensure that there was time for discussion.

He said that he was seeking a similar outcome to that in previous years. Any proposals would be extracted to form part of the Annex to the Report of the Meeting of Experts. As previously this would not be an agreed document but would serve as an important resource for the synthesis paper for the Meeting of States Parties. He looked forward to productive and stimulating discussions and a continuation of the constructive atmosphere of previous years.

One hundred States Parties to the Convention participated in the Meeting of Experts as follows: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This was **sixteen** more States Parties than the eighty four States Parties who had participated at the Meeting of Experts in 2014: twenty-two States Parties participated in 2015 which did not in 2014 – Albania, Armenia, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Croatia, Ghana,

Honduras, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Senegal, Slovenia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe – and six who had participated in 2014 did not in 2015 – Benin, Ethiopia, Gabon, Latvia, Nigeria and Singapore.

In addition, three states that had signed the Convention but had not yet ratified it participated in the Meeting of Experts: Cote D'Ivoire, Syrian Arab Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania. One state, Guinea, neither a party nor a signatory to the Convention, participated in the Meeting of Experts as observers. Seven international organizations also participated as observers: The European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). It was notable that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which had participated in 2014 did not in 2015. Six United Nations organisations also participated: United Nations 1540 Committee Group of Experts, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). In addition, at the invitation of the Chairman, in recognition of the special nature of the topics under consideration at this Meeting and without creating a precedent, eight scientific, professional, and academic organizations and experts participated in informal exchanges in the open sessions as guests of the Meeting of Experts: Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), Centres for Disease Control Uganda Virus Research Institute, the Developing Countries Vaccines Manufacturers Network (DCVMN), Georgia Institute of Technology, Global Network of Science Academies (IAP), The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), University of Bradford, Division of Peace Studies, and Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC). This was four more guests than had participated at the Meeting of Experts in 2014.

It was also agreed that as at previous meetings, this meeting would be suspended on Monday 10 August at about midday and resume in informal session with the Chairman remaining in the Chair to hear statements from a number of NGOs. In the event, the first two NGO statements were made at the end of the morning session and a further eight NGO statements were made in the afternoon session immediately after the introductory statement made by the Netherlands at the start of the afternoon session. Some twenty-one NGOs attended the meeting either as guests of the meeting or as NGO participants.

There were some 470 participants at the Meeting of Experts of which over 390 came from States Parties including over 200 participants from capitals. Total

numbers were larger than the participation at the Meeting of Experts in 2014 when there were over 430 participants of which over 330 came from States Parties including close to 150 participants from capitals.

Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief, Implementation Support Unit served as Secretary of the Meeting of Experts and Ms. Ngoc Phuong Van Der Blij, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit, served as Deputy Secretary.

Introductory Statements

Iran spoke first on behalf of the Group of the **Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties** saying that the Group would like to re-emphasise its position as reiterated in the final document of the NAM XVII Ministerial Conference held in Algiers, Algeria on 26 – 29 May 2014:

208. The Ministers of NAM States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) reaffirmed that the possibility of any use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins as weapons should be completely excluded, and the conviction that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind. They recognized the particular importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding Protocol and universal adherence to the Convention. They reiterated their call to promote international cooperation for peaceful purposes, including scientific-technical exchange. They underlined the importance to maintain close coordination among the NAM States Parties to the Convention and highlighted that the BTWC forms a whole and that, although it is possible to consider certain aspects separately, it is critical to deal with all of the issues interrelated to this Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

209. The Ministers of NAM States Parties to the BTWC welcomed the active participation by NAM States Parties in the Seventh BTWC Review Conference held in Switzerland from 5-22 December 2011, to advance their positions on this Convention, particularly their key role in the adoption of the important decisions related to the implementation of Article X of the BTWC, especially by emphasizing the need for enhancing international cooperation, assistance and exchanges in toxins, biological agents equipment and technology for peaceful purposes, bearing in mind the Action Plan on the implementation of Article X submitted by the NAM States Parties at the Sixth Review Conference, and the additional NAM States Parties' proposal on a mechanism for the full, implementation of Article X of the Convention presented more recently. They further encouraged the BTWC States Parties to implement the Article X, as set forth in paragraphs 50-61 of the Final Document of the seventh BTWC Review Conference. They also welcomed the outcome of the Seventh Review

Conference and in particular its decision to include cooperation and assistance as one of the Standing Agenda Items, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X, as well as the Conference's decision to establish a database system to facilitate requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation among States Parties, and the establishment of a Sponsorship Programme, funded by voluntary contributions from States Parties, in order to support and increase the participation of developing States Parties in the meetings of the inter-sessional programme in the framework of the BTWC.

210. The Ministers of NAM States Parties to the BTWC emphasized the importance of the BTWC role in the total prohibition on all biological and toxin weapons. They reiterated that multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory legally binding agreement, dealing with all Articles of the Convention, in a balanced and comprehensive manner, would sustainably strengthen the Convention. They reaffirmed that the respective mandates of this Convention and other international organizations should be respected, while utilizing the experiences of the relevant multilateral organizations dealing with human and animal health on issues that are of direct relevance to the Convention, and that no actions should be taken to undermine the convention and/or interfere with its mandate.

The statement went on to say that *The Group of NAM and Other States Parties to the BWC attaches great importance to international cooperation as the first priority of the Group ... we continue to believe that there is need for an effective mechanism to ensure the full, effective-discriminatory implementation of Article X. It then said that We recognize the importance of the BWC and its role in the total ban on all biological and toxin weapons. The Group re-emphasizes that multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement, dealing with all Articles of the Convention, in a balanced and comprehensive manner, would sustainably strengthen the Convention. In this context, we believe that the respective mandates of this Convention and other international organizations should be respected, while utilizing the experiences of relevant multilateral organizations dealing with human and animal health on issues of direct relevance to the Convention. In this regard, no actions should be undertaken to undermine the Convention and/or interfere with its mandate.*

The statement also noted that *While the Group recalls its position on proposals related to compliance assessments, it reiterates that such proposals should not distract the attention of States Parties away from strengthening the Convention in all its aspects including the need for a verification mechanism. Effective international action against biological threats needs to be universal, legally binding, and non-discriminatory. In addition, this cannot be achieved*

without strengthening national capacity.

It went on to add that *NAM notes that there have been recent advances demonstrating the increasing sophistication of synthetic biology, together with other enabling technologies, which have benefits together with the potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention. All states must conduct such activities in a transparent manner, in order to build the confidence of other States Parties. There is a need to regulate these activities, to ensure that they do not lead to any concerns related to ethics, safety and security as well as any uses contrary to the Convention.* The statement mentioned recent work on H5N1 and also on new strains of viruses said that *These recent developments once again highlight the need to conclude a legally binding agreement on appropriate multilateral verification arrangements. In the past, useful work has been done in this regard under the BWC in the Ad Hoc Group and NAM continues to attach high importance to preserving and eventually resuming this work.*

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Iran last submitted a CBM in 2011 and has not submitted one in 2012, 2013, 2014 or 2015]

The **Russian Federation** then spoke saying *The effectiveness of our joint work must have special significance this year, because we start the BWC Review conference next year. With this conference everyone has grand expectations and hopes to turn towards the resumption of multilateral efforts on strengthening the BWC and solving bio-security issues, relying particularly on our Convention. We should not have any illusions, there are no other instruments in solving these issues, and they must not be.* The statement then said *We all know what happened in the format of the BWC in 2001 and its consequences in the next 15 years. In particular, we relate some problems and violations in the field of bio-security fraught with dangerous consequences even in the developed countries just with this reason. We are convinced that we all need profound analyses of the current situation in the framework of the BWC and concrete proposals in solving mentioned issues. We must find answers to all these questions in the framework of the preparation for the Review conference and we also need to prepare concrete solutions for their adoption on the Review conference. For successful realization of the Review conference we will need to implement a significant work on its organizational and substantive aspects.*

The statement went on to say that *We need to act seriously in solving the issues on improving methods at the events of the BWC. We need to ensure their effectiveness, non-discrimination and inclusiveness. We, together with our Belarusian colleagues have elaborated and distributed the working document BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.3, which contains concrete proposals and recommendations. All our proposals are based on the generally accepted practice, but for some incomprehensible reasons many of the important*

provisions in the framework of the BWC were simply ignored. The statement added that: We need to start working at the organizational issues to prepare for the Review conference in 2016. One of the reasons of low effectiveness of the last 2 Review conferences was the absence of full-format preparatory process, in the course of which concrete proposals of the states-parties could be examined. The format of the BWC unfavorably differs from the Convention of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Non-Proliferation Treaty. By the time of the session of the states-parties of the Convention in December this year we should jointly define how to change the situation for the best. In the development of our last year initiatives in the framework of the BWC for the current meeting we have prepared the Draft of the proper resolution of the VIII Review conference including negotiation mandate for the new organ of negotiations – Open working group, which is supposed to be charged to elaborate concrete measures and proposals on strengthening the Convention and on improving its implementation starting from 2017. The presentation of the Draft of the negotiation mandate and its discussion will be held in August, on Tuesday 11, at 18.00 after the plenary session.

The statement concluded by noting that *We would like to emphasize that we are determined to the constructive and fruitful cooperation and joint work with all delegations which are interested in the consolidation of the BWC.*

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that the Russian Federation has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

Denmark then spoke saying that they fully aligned themselves with the statement to be made by the European Union and went on to say that *For four decades, the BTWC has made strong contributions to eliminating biological weapons. ... Although most States have long since abandoned the idea of utilizing biological weapons, the dual-use nature of biological materials requires us to be ever vigilant in our efforts.* The statement then said that:

Biosecurity has been one of the priorities in Denmark's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, and Denmark has accumulated substantial knowledge about biosecurity over the past years. In 2008, the Danish parliament introduced specific legislation addressing biosecurity. This legislation is enforced by one government agency, the Centre for Biosecurity and Biopreparedness (CBB), which leads to a coherent and lean approach to biosecurity across both the private and the public sector.

It added that:

In 2014, the Danish Centre for Biosecurity and Biopreparedness introduced additional requirements to regulate dual-use immaterial [sic]

technology in the form of sensitive know-how and skills that may be misused in the context of biological weapons development.

The statement then went on to address international security by considering the Denmark-Kenya project under the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) Action Package 3 on Biosafety and Biosecurity. It then considered Regional biosecurity: European Biosecurity Regulations Forum (EBRF). The statement said that *At present, the forum consists of representatives from France, The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Denmark. Outreach efforts are ongoing in order to establish contact to other European countries and widen the group.* It then added:

In order to strengthen European biosecurity, the forum will first conduct a gap-analysis with the aim of establishing a baseline for biosecurity, as well as the establishment of an overview of points of contact for regulatory agencies. Later it will be considered how to offer capacity building to European countries that request biosecurity assistance The forum also intends to focus on issues related to the regulation of intangible technology in a safe manner that does not inhibit free research.

The statement concluded by saying that *Denmark looks forward to a productive meeting of Experts that will ... take us one step further to a successful review conference in 2016.*

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Denmark has submitted its CBM in 2015 and this is available on the public section of the website]

Bangladesh then spoke saying that they aligned themselves with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. The statement went on to say that: *Bangladesh is party to all major Disarmament treaties including the NPT, the CTBT, the CWC and the BWC. We strongly adhere to the UNSC Resolution 1540 and added our voice in all occasions to those in favour of a world free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Bangladesh is strongly supports complete and unconditional nuclear disarmament, both vertically and horizontally, and ban on other WMDs.* It then added that:

I would also like to take this occasion to briefly state the measures taken by us at the national level to comply with the BWC and the UNSC resolution 1540. Firstly, Our main laboratories dealing with biological agents, like the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) are engaged in extensive international cooperation, particularly with WHO and CDC of the US, which contributes to enhancing transparency. Secondly, the Experts of the

UNSCR 1540 Committee visited IEDCR to see the security and safeguard measures in place for biological agents to prevent their potential slippage into wrong hands, and made some recommendations for improvements. The matter has been addressed in the National Action Plan for ensuring compliance with UNSCR 1540. Thirdly, we organised a National Workshop with the concerned UN Experts to raise awareness about compliance with UNSCR 1540, including on preventing proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.... We believe that the Confidence Building Measures (CBM) reporting mechanism of the ISU is attaining increasing success and attention gradually, and Bangladesh looks forward to participate in the reporting process in coming future after completion of some internal preparations.

The statement then went on to address Article X and said that: *There is need for an effective mechanism to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X. The enhancement of international cooperation for the use of biological agents for peaceful purposes is an essential part of compliance with the Convention and is crucial for the realization of the purpose and objective of the Convention.* It then said that: *The development of the database system to facilitate requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation among States Parties as per the decision of the 7th Rev Con, is indeed an important achievement. We appreciate the Implementation Support Unit's (ISU) success in this regard. At the national level, we are looking to have a national legislation for the BWC, as we have one already for the CWC. This is an area in which Bangladesh might need assistance on legislative drafting in near future, in the form of a Model Law that can be used as the main guiding document.*

It then concluded by saying that:

I would conclude by saying that the multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, comprehensive and balanced legally binding agreement is the call of the day. This would further strengthen the Convention. Bangladesh remains committed to the cause of total renunciation of biological and toxin weapons, and looks forward to a successful outcome of this inter-sessional Expert Meeting as well as the 8th RevCon next year. We are hopeful that the scourge of biological and toxin weapons can be eradicated totally from the globe through universal, complete and non-discriminatory implementation of the BWC by concluding a legally binding agreement on appropriate multilateral verification arrangements.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Bangladesh has not submitted a CBM in 2015]

The United States of America then spoke saying that *the United States*

continues to welcome the opportunity these meetings present for a substantive dialogue on ways we can strengthen the Convention and its implementation. We hope that both this Experts Meeting and the annual Meeting of States Parties will foster discussions that lead to consensus on common understandings and effective action to achieve these goals. The statement then said that:

Clearly, a critical area of this dialogue is international cooperation and assistance, and the United States remains committed to doing our part to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of relevant material, equipment, and information, including through the Global Health Security Agenda. We look forward to a continuation of our discussion on practical ways to strengthen such exchanges, including in such areas as public health, bio-risk management, and national implementation of the Convention.

After considering Article VII, the statement went on to say:

Mr. Chairman, Article XII of the Convention, which states that our review of the operation of the Convention should take into account relevant new scientific and technological developments, is particularly significant for the business of this experts meeting. The United States will continue to contribute to the BWC discussion of developments in the life sciences, including how to mitigate the risks of dual-use and gain-of-function research. Our emphasis is on identifying areas where there may be a need for Parties to take action and on promoting convergence of views on such matters.

The United States will also continue to stress the vital importance of national implementation of the Convention, which is important to ensure that the BWC actually fulfills its lofty objectives and – through transparency – that Parties have confidence that others are complying with our mutually held obligations. We believe that these goals can best be served through increased availability of information about national implementation and a more common understanding of what effective implementation involves.

To implement Article III in particular, the Seventh RevCon called for appropriate measures, including effective national export controls. To respond to this call, we and 36 other Parties have submitted a working paper proposing a common understanding on key elements of an effective national export control system that fulfill the obligations of Article III. We urge all Parties to support this understanding.

The statement then added that *Of course another critical aspect of implementation is effective bio-risk management. Parties may be aware of*

recently discovered, inadvertent shipments of live anthrax spores by the U.S. Department of Defense. It went on to outline the steps that had been taken to deal with the situation. The statement concluded by saying:

Finally, Mr. Chairman, as we are now less than 15 months from our next Review Conference, I would like to remind Parties of the need this year to begin our preparations for that Conference, the culmination of our efforts over five years. As in past review cycles, we will look to you, as this year's Chairman, to consult with Parties, the Implementation Support Unit, and eventually the RevCon President to organize the most productive possible meeting next year. It will be essential for the Conference to record consensus among Parties on the fundamental value of the Convention, how to strengthen it, and how more effectively to organize our work in the next intersessional period.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that the United States of America has submitted its CBM in 2015 and this is available on the public section of the website]

France then spoke saying that the statement to be made by the European Union was fully endorsed and that France wished to add some national remarks. The statement said that France considers that the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. This is why strengthening instruments against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is essential. This is also why France play an active role and continues to do so in the fight against the proliferation of such weapons. We are convinced that the future of the BWC requires the adoption of concrete measures to make its implementation more effective.

The statement went on to note that we are entering the preparatory phase of the 8th Review Conference. It is essential to start discussions as early as possible to identify collectively concrete actions that can be incorporated into the final Review Conference document in 2016. Two particular areas for such action were identified. The first related to Article VII of the Convention which France considers a vital section of the BWC, which must have enhanced operational implementation – which is why France, jointly with India, has submitted WP.7. This working paper, to which France will return in more detail in the session devoted to Article VII, proposes the creation of a database listing the offers of assistance which could be provided in the event of a State Party being exposed to danger as a result of a violation of the provisions of the Convention. The second is that France considers that the national implementation of the Convention is crucial and must continue to be the subject of discussions between the States Parties. It went on to say that France proposed, at the 7th Review Conference of the BWC, establishing a review mechanism by peers, whose objective is to strengthen the national

implementation and encourage an exchange of good practices. France is pleased to see that the organization of the pilot exercise in December 2013 in France has attracted the interest of several countries that have adopted the mechanism by organizing their own peer-review exercise. France is looking forward to hearing the presentations to be made on this subject and hope other delegations will also consider organizing a peer review in coming months.

The statement then said that France would like to point out that 2015 marks the 90th anniversary of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, of which France is the depositary. To mark this occasion France is organising jointly with UNIDIR two side events, one in the margins of this Meeting of Experts and one during the Meeting of States Parties in December. France continues to call for universalization of the Protocol and the lifting of reservations.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that France has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

Pakistan then spoke saying that Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by Iran on behalf of the NAM and Other States Parties to the BTWC. The statement then went on to recall the outcome of the Seventh Review Conference and the delicate balance in its Final Document and noted the three Standing Agenda Items and the two biennial topics. In regard to the SAI on advances in science and technology the statement then said that:

Pakistan is concerned about some new developments in Science and Technology that have the potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention. The recent advances in synthetic biology raise immediate concerns related to ethics, safety and security. In this regard, States should employ utmost transparency and confidence building measures during all their activities related to Synthetic biology. There is also a need for strict regulation on the development of synthetic biology, to ensure that it does not lead to any concerns related to safety and security as well as incidents of proliferation that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes.

It then added that:

The threats posed by the dual-use nature of biotechnology are real and cannot be over-stated. We are witnessing the growing marginalization of the need to possess real scientific knowledge or "tacit knowledge" due to easy access to wide-ranging scientific information on the internet. Also, the rapid advances in enabling technologies continue to decrease costs of performing scientific experiments and procedures. In the backdrop of these latest developments and trends, the need to conclude a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement on verification provisions, is therefore, ever-pressing and necessary.

Pakistan would, also, highlight the importance of holding regular reviews of the developments in science and technology related to the Convention. These reviews should provide impetus not only to enhanced awareness regarding new technology related to the Convention but also towards enhanced cooperation and sharing of such technology. We firmly believe that the potential dual-use nature of emerging technologies in itself should not be used as a pretext for proscribing or restricting their availability to developing countries for peaceful purposes.

The statement went on to conclude by saying that:

The absence of a dedicated verification mechanism for the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention, to ensure compliance with the Convention, also remains a source of concern. While the Secretary General's mechanism is the only existing tool for investigation after an actual "use" of biological and toxin weapons has occurred, the Secretary General's mechanism, however, does not substitute the need for a dedicated verification mechanism for the Convention which would ensure that biological and toxin weapons are never developed, produced, stockpiled or otherwise acquired or retained, thereby precluding their use by the States Parties.

Pakistan believes that the only credible and sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, legally binding Protocol, including on verification provisions, dealing with all the Articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner. Pakistan, however, does not want to use the difference of opinion among states parties over the need for a legally binding Protocol, including on verification provisions, as a pretext for stalling progress on other issues in the BWC. My delegation will continue to participate actively and constructively in the discussions on the various agenda items to explore progress where consensus is possible.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Pakistan last submitted a CBM in 2012 and has not submitted a CBM in 2015]

Malaysia then spoke saying that Malaysia associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the delegation of Iran, on behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned Movement State Parties to the BWC. The statement went on to say that:

For the past three years, there have been many ideas and proposals presented during the intersessional meetings. These have led to better common understandings among all State Parties. As we move forward

this year, and further onwards towards the 8th Review Conference, it is time that these common understandings be considered and made tangible into effective actions. This MXP provides us the opportunity to look at the BWC from an objective, technical lens. It provides clarity, and context, to real world issues – to assist the political conceptualisations and debates later on. Malaysia calls on all State Parties to focus our energy during this Meeting to identify tangible effective actions that could bring our work forward.

The statement then added that:

Malaysia emphasizes the importance for the Meeting to reaffirm and to expand the understanding of the core principles and goals of the BWC, taking into account developments that have taken place in the international security environment, particularly in multidisciplinary scientific fields relevant to the Convention.

Malaysia also emphasizes the continuing need to conclude a legally binding agreement on appropriate multilateral verification arrangements. The useful work undertaken in the past in this regard needs to be resumed.

The statement went on to discuss Article X and Article VII and then in regard to national implementation said that:

With regard to strengthening national implementation of the BWC, Malaysia has undertaken a number of steps: ongoing work continues on a draft BTWC bill; a draft National Code of Conduct for Biosecurity had been accepted; the Malaysian Laboratory Biosafety and Biosecurity Policy and Guidelines was developed in 2014; and the Malaysian Biosafety and Biosecurity Association was launched in 2011. These are all elements of our comprehensive national biosecurity and biosafety framework.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Malaysia has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

Brazil then spoke saying that Brazil associates itself with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States. The statement after welcoming the increase in States Parties to 173 then said that:

Universalization of the BWC is essential for fully achieving the objectives and purposes of the Convention. States parties should intensify efforts to reach such goal. Stronger action is also needed to reinforce international cooperation under the BWC. A renewed commitment by all States Parties would contribute to the identification

of ways and means to improve scientific cooperation and technology transfer. This is vital for the implementation of the Convention at the national level and for its universalization.

The statement then went on to say that:

In order to ensure balanced implementation of the provisions of the BWC, we should keep in mind that the Convention has two fundamental pillars: non-proliferation and technological and scientific cooperation for peaceful purposes. The provisions of Article X clearly indicate that States Parties “have the right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes”.

In this regard, Brazil supports the NAM’s proposal to establish a mechanism to ensure full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X. Strengthening cooperation under the BWC will serve as an incentive for more States to adhere to the Convention and to guarantee biological substances will be exclusively used for peaceful purposes.

Brazil then said that:

Biological weapons proliferation is a major threat to international security due to the fact that, in contrast to the nuclear and chemical arms control regimes, there is no multilateral mechanism to verify compliance with the biological disarmament norm. We are convinced that the effectiveness of the BWC could be greatly enhanced through the adoption of a universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding verification mechanism.

Oversight of life sciences research is not an effective measure to pursue if we are to determine whether the provisions of the BWC are being complied with. In order to rise up to that challenge, we must start addressing options to settle pending issues of the Convention, in particular the need to resume negotiations of a verification Protocol.

Finally, Brazil supports the establishment of an Organization for the Prohibition of Biological Weapons, which would contribute not only to restore the credibility of the BWC, but also to foster international cooperation in the life sciences and related fields.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Brazil has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

Mexico then spoke saying that that Mexico highly valued these Meetings of Experts as they enable a more active involvement of the scientific community given the links between it and the provisions of the Convention and other international mechanisms in the field of public health. Recent experiences with disease outbreaks in different regions in the world have shown us the importance of strengthening synergy with all stakeholders and all the specialized international institutions. In that sense, an example of useful mechanism is the International Health Regulations (2005) of the WHO, which caters appropriately for the coordination of a situation of health emergency caused by a natural outbreak or biological weapons, using a protocol approved by the UN membership, and it has proven to be a valuable instrument for early warning in case of pandemics.

The statement went on to say that Mexico considers that the report on confidence building measures is a fundamental pillar of international security and a rule of the Biological Weapons Convention. Therefore, Mexico calls for the improvement and expanded participation of States Parties with the timely submission of national reports, both in quality and quantity, thus contributing to transparency and strengthening of the regime established by the Convention. In that context, Mexico has taken an important step, made possible by the holding of a multi-agency CBM Workshop, in presenting its CBM for the first time in open and public format, as a sign of transparency of the government of Mexico and its commitment to the implementation of the Convention.

The statement then said that Mexico welcomed the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the Biological Weapons Convention, constituting the first treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. This, undoubtedly, was an important step in building a multilateral architecture for peace and security.

However, the goodwill of countries as well as their expectations, hopes and trust placed in the Convention, and above all in compliance, forty years ago and still now so long since the Convention's entry into force, unfortunately have not taken concrete form due to the lack of a verification instrument. Mexico reiterates that the verification of the Convention may be possible with a method or agency which enables the elimination of the weapons prohibited in the Convention to be verified in a multilateral and binding manner. We consider that the Eighth Review Conference in 2016 will be an opportunity for the States Parties to decide by consensus the form in which to endow the Convention with a mechanism for the verification of its implementation and compliance. It is necessary and possible to achieve the strengthening of the whole framework comprising the Convention.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Mexico has submitted its CBM in 2015 and this is available on the public section of the website]

China then spoke saying that:

While rapid progress in biological science and technology has brought benefits to human health and social development, it has also engendered various risks and challenges, and has rendered the issue of bio-safety and security more prominent in this century.

Firstly, the increasing risks for the misuse of biological science and technology. At present, the development of biological science and technology has entered the fast lane, with emerging new technologies and means as well as expanding scope of the research. The ensuing accumulated risks for misusing biological science and technology constitute potential challenges for the bright prospect of utilizing biological science and technology.

Secondly, the yawning gap between the North and the South in biological technology. Due to their low starting point, weak basis and late development in bio-tech research, the developing countries are lagging further behind the developed countries in bio-tech equipment, personnel qualifications and research capabilities with deteriorating imbalance between the North and the South in technological capabilities, and are increasingly becoming the weak area of bio-safety and security.

Thirdly, the grim situation in the prevention and control of epidemics. Epidemics pose a grave threat to human health and global security and stability. In recent years, successive outbreaks of SARS, Avian Influenza, Ebola Virus Disease and MERS have highlighted the disquieting situation in the prevention and control of epidemics in a globalized world.

Fourthly, the looming threat of biological weapons. Due to the long-standing lack of a legally-binding protocol of the Convention, rapid progress in bio-science and technological means and the dual-use nature of bio-defense technology, activities for the research and development of bio-offensive capabilities have become more secret and concealed, with the possibility for the evil of biological weapons to reappear in the world.

The statement then went on to say that:

In our view, it is necessary to adhere to a bio-safety and security concept featuring balance, cooperation, mutual assistance and equity, and to earnestly strengthen the effectiveness and authority of the Convention so as to create a community of common destiny for global bio-safety and security.

"Balance" means attaching importance to both development and supervision, and to reduce the risks for the misuse of biological science and technology. The continuous development of biological science and technology has raised the requirement for the supervising and monitoring of bio-safety and security. China supports the efforts of States Parties to improve their capacity building for bio-safety and security according to their specific situations, to raise their level of management and transparency for dual-use bio-science and technology research, to establish risk assessment and early warning systems for the misuse of bio-science and technology, and to raise awareness of research personnel concerning bio-safety and security. We also support the sharing of useful experience on bio-risk management among countries, to evaluate in time the impact of the development of bio-science and technology on the Convention, so as to ensure that the implementation of the Convention keep up with the progress of biological science and technology.

After considering cooperation and mutual assistance, the statement went on to address equity by saying:

"Equitable" means the rights, interests and national conditions of different states should be respected, and a compliance mechanism of the Convention which is equitable, reasonable, effective, and viable should be established. The Chinese delegation supports enhanced national implementation by States Parties on a gradual and voluntary basis and in light of each country's national condition. China always believes that the negotiation and conclusion of a protocol on the comprehensive strengthening of the effectiveness of the Convention, including a verification mechanism, would be the best compliance mechanism within the framework of the Convention. Investigation of alleged use of biological weapons is a complex and sensitive matter and should be handled in strict accordance with the relevant provisions, namely, States Parties may lodge a complaint under Article VI with the Security Council, which should in turn decide upon and preside over any possible investigation. At the same time, States Parties must remain vigilant to the threats posed by conventional biological weapons, and enhance the cooperation between the Convention and the 1540 Committee and other relevant mechanisms, in order to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons and bio-terrorism.

The statement then concluded by stating:

China always upholds the objectives and purposes of the Convention, and attaches great importance to bio-safety and security. In the spirit of comprehensive and effective implementation of the Convention, China

has timely submitted information on its confidence building measures, and put in place a legislative system that encompasses all aspects of the Convention, as well as an effective national implementation mechanism. Guided by its overall national security concept, China has set out to enhance the overall strategy on bio-safety and security, to engage in capacity building and to actively promote international cooperation in the field of biology. China has provided, to the best of its capacity and upon request, material assistance and training to other countries in need. Last January, a Sino-French cooperation project, China's first BSL-4 laboratory was completed in Wuhan. Now the laboratory is in the general test-run stage. Relevant declaration will be submitted as soon as all the necessary certifications are available. During the past year, China has also actively provided financial, material, technical and personnel assistance to the West African countries in their response to the Ebola outbreak.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that China has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

Italy then spoke saying that Italy aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the European Union. The statement went on to say:

As decided by the 7th Review Conference of the BWC, this year we will continue focusing on ways to strengthen implementation of article VII, which relates to assistance provided to requesting States Parties that have been exposed to danger as a result of a violation of the Convention. The discussions held last year identified concrete avenues that could be pursued in this regard. We also believe that this debate would greatly benefit from the lessons learned from the response to the Ebola outbreak of 2014, in which Italy was actively engaged.

As the discussions on article VII have also underlined, national preparedness contributes to international capabilities for response, investigation and mitigation of disease outbreaks, be they of a natural, accidental, or deliberate character. Also, any response to the use or threats of use of biological and toxin weapons requires the effective implementation of the BWC at the national level.

The statement then said that:

In this context, Italy believes that Confidence-Building Measures remain an essential instrument to promote the purposes of the BWC, as they help demonstrating compliance with the Convention, and are key to increasing mutual trust and transparency. In this prospect, Italy believes that renewed efforts are needed to increase the participation in the CBMs process. We also support further consideration of innovative

approaches to enhance national implementation and build mutual trust such as voluntary exchanges of information and best practices, for example through the proposed peer review mechanism.

It then said that:

Italy considers exchanges in biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material for peaceful purposes, as legitimate goals under the BWC, as well as important elements of international cooperation, as foreseen by Article X. At the same time, we believe in the need to ensure that only activities for peaceful purposes not prohibited by the Convention are undertaken, in accordance with Article III. As a consequence, we are convinced that appropriate export controls are compatible with the provisions of Article X. The legitimate needs of cooperation in the biological sciences or in the economic and technological fields should not turn into illegal assistance in the development of biological weapons.

The statement then concluded by saying that:

With the 8th Review Conference of the BWC fast approaching, we – like others – would support the establishment of a transparent and inclusive preparatory process aimed at consolidating common understandings on the proposals to strengthen the Convention that have emerged from the Intersessional Meetings. These will form the basis of the road map that the Revcon will have to outline for the next intersessional cycle.

We look forward to this Meeting of Experts, hoping that it will allow us to agree on a viable and constructive preparatory process to guide us towards a successful 2016 Review Conference.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Italy has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

India then spoke saying that India associates itself with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC. The statement went on to say that:

As we mark the 40th anniversary of its entry into force this year, India stresses the high importance of the BWC as the first disarmament treaty banning an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. India shares the widespread interest amongst States Parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention through the negotiation and conclusion of a Protocol for that purpose covering all provisions of the Convention. We believe this is necessary in view of the new challenges to international peace and security emanating from

proliferation trends, including the threat posed by terrorists or other non-state actors seeking access to biological agents or toxins for terrorist purposes. It is the responsibility of States Parties to ensure that their commitments and obligations under the Convention are fully and effectively implemented.

We believe that only a multilaterally agreed mechanism for verification of compliance can provide the assurance of compliance by States Parties of obligations under the Convention and act as a deterrent against non-compliance.

The statement then said that:

India has submitted its CBMs in 2015 and is thus up to date in this regard. We have participated actively in the meetings of the inter-sessional programme which have the mandate of promoting common understanding and effective action on issues identified by the Seventh Review Conference. India supports a robust consultation process amongst all States Parties leading to the Eighth Review Conference next year so as to contribute to its success through adequate preparations on substantive and procedural issues.

The statement went on to add that:

In our view, measures taken to mitigate biological risks should be proportional to the assessed risk and not hamper legitimate peaceful activities including international cooperation. Further, there should be no hindrance to peaceful activities such as vaccine development, which are important for developing countries for meeting their public health needs. India looks forward to continuing discussions on Codes of Conduct and education and awareness raising to explore ways to achieve further progress under the Convention. We should continue to explore various proposals on conducting S&T review under the Convention in the run up to the next Review Conference, including the proposal made by India in the working paper submitted to the last Review Conference.

The statement then made some comments on Article X and added that:

India has strong and law-based national export controls and is committed to maintaining the highest international standards with reference to control of biological agents and toxins to ensure that transfers are authorised only when the intended use is for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

The standing agenda item on National Implementation provides a ready platform for States Parties to share and learn from their national

experiences in the implementation of the Convention. We have emphasized the responsibility of States Parties to fully implement their obligations under the Convention and adopt requisite national measures to this end. India has a broad based regulatory framework to prevent the misuse of biological science and technology, including effective export controls matching the highest international standards. We also support assistance to States Parties for strengthening their national systems for bio-safety and bio-security.

The statement then addressed Article VII by saying:

India views Article VII assistance as a legal obligation of States Parties, as clearly laid out in the Convention and as agreed in previous Review Conference documents. An event relating to violation of the BWC is more than a public health emergency under the IHR (2005). While coordination and cooperation with relevant UN bodies such as the WHO, FAO, OIE, etc. are important complementary measures, it is clear that the lack of a comprehensive Protocol to strengthen implementation of all aspects of the BWC has created a gap in the international community's capacity to respond effectively and provide assistance to States Parties to the BWC. Pending the conclusion of a comprehensive Protocol, a separate database on Assistance under Article VII could be a useful first step in bridging this gap. We are happy to join France in tabling WP 7 on this subject, which we hope will receive broad based support in this meeting.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that India has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

Cuba then spoke saying that Cuba endorses the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to the Convention. The statement went on to say that Cuba, like other members of NAM and other States Parties to the Convention, considers it necessary to have a multilateral legally binding Protocol to strengthen in a balanced and comprehensive manner the Convention, including its basic pillars, including assistance and cooperation. We welcome the initiatives that have arisen in this regard.

The statement then added that the last Meeting of States Parties, held from 1 to 5 December 2014, also demonstrated the need to improve the working methods of this forum. Cuba then said that we consider that the Eighth Review Conference should take a decision regarding these issues.

It then went on to say that the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention had had important results, particularly in regard to international cooperation. However, Cuba considers that much remains to be done to advance towards full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X. In particular, Cuba is concerned about the attempt by some countries aimed at conditioning the international cooperation through the creation and

promotion of arbitrary mechanisms of export control and transfers. The statement reiterated that there should be no constraints on the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X of the Convention.

The statement added that Cuba attaches great importance to the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and that this is essential to ensure the protection of man and the environment in the peaceful use of biological agents and toxins. As a sign of our commitment to the full, effective and non-discriminatory application of the Convention in our national paper on offers and requests to the database, we are offering at the request of the States Parties: courses, seminars, conferences and other workshops including training, biosafety and other issues related to the implementation of the Convention. Cuba reiterated their readiness to cooperate to promote scientific exchange in biological sciences and technology for biosafety and biosecurity, surveillance and detection of infectious diseases affecting humans, animals and plants, and for the use of science and technology for peaceful purposes.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Cuba has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

Australia then spoke saying that *The Australian Government remains a strong supporter of the BWC, and we are pleased to continue to actively participate in strengthening the international framework governing biosafety and biosecurity, as well as the international community's response to pressing global health issues, and specifically the BWC. In this respect, we underline the importance of Article X cooperation, are hence pleased to have been able to provide support to several delegations attending this meeting, through the ISU's sponsorship program.*

The statement went on to say that:

The Australian delegation would like to underline the importance of crystallising specific proposals, which will feed into the RevCon process. We note that this presents an opportunity to engage in constructive and fruitful discussion in ways to strengthen the BWC and create a more robust and effective intersessional process. We look forward to working with the BWC states parties, yourself, and to the President of the RevCon process to achieve this end. Australia is particularly cognisant of the need for us to work at developing cross regional approaches as we address this issue, and in this respect, we are delighted to be working with a joint paper with Malaysia, and a number of other partners, on the important issue of more effective "national implementation".

The statement then concluded by saying that:

We also need to continue to improve the way we address rapid advances in science and technology, the formulation of an effective response to a disease outbreak under Article VII, continuing progress on transparency

issues, including formulating recommendations for the improvement of the CBM mechanism, and better means for providing reassurance that all activities in the life sciences, are in full accordance with the obligations of the Convention. We are also pleased to support a renewed priority given to export controls, and in this respect, we welcome the US led paper on export controls which we have endorsed.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Australia has submitted its CBM in 2015 and this is available on the public section of the website]

Argentina then spoke saying that they emphasized the importance of this meeting of Experts in enabling strategic thinking during 2015 in regard to preparing for the upcoming Review Conference in 2016. Argentina emphasized the sovereign right of States Parties to use the life sciences for peaceful purposes. They also supported reinforced efforts towards universalization. The Standing Agenda Item on cooperation and assistance was a continuing concern. Argentina supported SCR 1540 and the efforts on training and dual use material. Argentina as a participant of the Australia Group supports its offer of assistance. In regard to science and technology, States Parties need to further explore and promote the responsible use of such knowledge. On national implementation, a global approach needs to be adopted by each State party with participation nationally of all stakeholders. Efforts need to be pooled on Article VII to counter any use of biological or toxin agents by a state or non-state actor.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Argentina has submitted its CBM in 2015 although this is not available on the public section of the website]

Ghana then spoke saying that Ghana aligns itself with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the NAM. The statement went on to say that:

Ghana acknowledges the progressive reports presented to this meeting by the developed State Parties in line with the provisions of the Convention. Ghana is a beneficiary country of some of these assistance, as mentioned in our previous statement presented yesterday, and we are very grateful.

Our capacity to monitor, isolate and manage dangerous and infectious pathogens has improved over the years as we continue to gain from our partners. We, however, believe that we cannot continue to gain much if the West African Region, as a whole, remains vulnerable to such dangers.

We, therefore, need to take a decision as a body to cover developing regions of the world, comprehensively, with high security laboratories, requisite training, and other essential facilities. We believe this goal can be achieved, through the creation of regional and sub-regional centres

of excellence across the world.

The statement then added that:

The Convention needs a much more coherent coordination mechanism for effective implementation across the world. The Coordination mechanism at our disposal, currently, remains weak and for that reason holds gaps for potentially dangerous accidents to occur in many parts of the world. Ghana believes, that the need to establish a well-resourced organisation to coordinate the implementation of the BWC is necessary and must be taken into serious consideration.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Ghana has not submitted its CBM in 2015]

The Chair then said that the **Netherlands** would make their statement at the start of the afternoon session and **Libya** would make theirs at the start of the Tuesday morning session. He then invited the **European Union** as an intergovernmental organization to make their statement.

The **European Union** then spoke saying that Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia aligned themselves with this statement.

The statement went on to say that: *The development of life sciences brings good solutions for humanity but the threat emanating from the possible misuse of biological materials as weapons continues to pose substantial challenges to international peace and security. Therefore, it is crucial that all States not yet parties join the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). It is also in this light that the EU and its Member States have engaged constructively in the current inter-sessional process by contributing Working Papers and presentations aimed at promoting common understandings and effective action on the topics and issues under review.*

The statement then added that:

Substantive working documents were submitted at the last meeting of experts regarding the biennial item on how to strengthen the implementation of Article VII. The cross-regional interest in this topic shows that there is room for a substantive discussion and for the identification of specific areas for work, which could be reflected in the report of the meeting of States Parties, for further consideration at the next Review Conference. The EU and its Member States note that improving national capabilities for disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis and public health systems provides the first line of defence against cases of alleged use of biological and toxin weapons. In

discussions on making Article VII operational, we need to take into account relevant actions that are being taken elsewhere, especially in the WHO, to build effective response capabilities to deal with future major outbreaks of infectious disease.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome the participation of numerous renowned life scientists in the work of our meeting: they make a significant contribution to mutual understanding with governmental officials and policy makers, including by their involvement in global actions, such as raising awareness of dual use, especially among students and young scientists. This is a key part of the work on the standing agenda items on science and technology as well as on national implementation.

The statement went on to say that:

In the past decade, the EU and its Member States have funded numerous projects in support of the BTWC. The EU is to finalize a new Council Decision in support of the BTWC, in the framework of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Under this new decision, the EU will support the following projects:

- (1) Promoting universal adherence to the BTWC by encouraging States not party to better understand the benefits of joining the Convention and getting more involved in BTWC meetings and other activities;*
- (2) Enhancing interaction with non-governmental stakeholders on Science and technology and Biosafety & Biosecurity;*
- (3) Developing national capacities for BTWC implementation – in particular in developing countries and on areas such as Articles VII and X – by improving the quality and quantity of declarations submitted under the Confidence-Building Measures system in order to enhance confidence in compliance with the Convention;*
- (4) Supporting the inter-sessional programme and the preparations for the Eighth Review Conference;*
- (5) Strengthening the United Nations Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical, Biological and Toxin Weapons;*
- (6) Enabling tools for awareness-raising, education and engagement.*

The statement then added that:

The EU and its Member States are engaged in supporting improvements in bio-safety and biosecurity around the globe; through the expertise of WHO we support projects aimed at promoting bio-risk

awareness, laboratory bio-risk management and development of national laboratory strategies to counter biological risks and enhance the core facilities. The EU has made continued efforts aiming at developing Centres of Excellence, mobilising resources to develop coherent and adequate CBRN policies. Current projects are focused at knowledge development and transfer of best practices on bio-safety, bio-security and bio-risk management, strengthening laboratory procedures, development of laboratory ISO-bank system, creation of an international network of universities and institutes to raise awareness on the dual-use dimension of biotechnology. The Global Partnership, as well as initiatives such as the Global Health Security Agenda, are helpful in addressing and improving global responses to health security threats.

As part of their concrete efforts to strengthen confidence in compliance with the BTWC, the EU and its Member States promote measures aimed at increasing the quality and relevance of CBM submissions. CBMs represent a unique instrument to help increase mutual trust, generate transparency and thus help demonstrate compliance with the Convention: all States Parties are obliged to submit their returns each year. With the financial support of the EU, the ISU has developed a CBM electronic facility. We must continue to work to make the CBM process as effective as possible.

The statement then concluded by adding that:

Effective national implementation is fundamental for the integrity of the Convention. The current inter-sessional process offers also an opportunity to identify innovative approaches, to enhance national implementation through voluntary exchanges of information, such as the proposed peer-review mechanism.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that 26 the 28 EU countries have submitted their CBMs in 2015 (Cyprus and Malta have not submitted returns as of 22 September 2015) and that almost two-thirds of those submitted are available on the public section of the website, whilst those for Croatia, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Spain are not available on the public section of the website]

After the statement by the European Union the formal meeting was suspended and resumed with the Chairman remaining in the chair to hear statements from ten NGOs. The first NGO statement was made at 12.43 and after two statements had been made, the Chairman resumed the formal session saying the remaining eight NGO statements would be taken after the statement by the Netherlands at the start of the afternoon session which would thereafter be considering the biennial topic *“How to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the*

provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties”.

The Secretary announced that there would be a side event during the lunch interval in Room XXII by Switzerland on *Developments in Science and Technology Relevant to the BWC*.

The **afternoon session** opened with the Chairman inviting the Netherlands to make their contribution to the opening statements.

The **Netherlands** then spoke saying that *This will be the last expert meeting before the RevCon in 2016. With only one States Parties meeting and a PrepCom ahead, we need to continue to think about how we maintain and strengthen compliance with the Convention as we move forward to 2016.* The statement then added that:

At the 7th RevCon in 2011, which was presided by the Netherlands, States Parties agreed that the intersessional process 2011-2016 should address three Standing Agenda items. Education, biosafety and biosecurity are all key elements in each of these items.

To further strengthen the implementation of the Convention in the Netherlands, we have set up a comprehensive biosecurity regime. Raising biosecurity awareness and education is an integral part of this regime. At this expert meeting we will provide insight in the Dutch biosecurity regime that we are currently implementing. We are doing this by organizing three side-events this week.

The statement then outlined these side events and went on to say that:

In the framework of Article VII and Article X, we consider the outreach activities of the Netherlands Biosecurity Office as an appropriate and useful tool. The Dutch biosecurity regime works bottom-up rather than top down. Each stakeholder has its own responsibilities, which involves awareness, education, and risk management in the field of biosecurity and non-proliferation. The role of the government is to stimulate and facilitate the necessary awareness and capabilities.

The statement then said that:

The Netherlands attaches great importance to the full implementation of all commitments of States Parties. Building confidence in compliance with the BTWC, supporting its national implementation, and promoting its universality remain our top priorities. Several States are currently trying to initiate a broader debate on compliance issues while confronted with a growing need to create new tools to enable States Parties to demonstrate their compliance.

In this context the Netherlands attaches importance to an effective and substantial preparation process towards the 2016 RevCon. All stakeholders should be involved on discussion on the best way forward. In order to be able to reach a positive and substantive outcome at the RevCon we suggested last year setting up informal open ended meetings with all interested States Parties to build further on efforts in areas where common understanding and consensus exists.

The statement concluded by saying that:

In our view, it is currently neither possible nor politically feasible to return to negotiations on a legally binding additional protocol to the BTWC. There is no consensus on how to take this forward. We are willing to work towards identifying options that could achieve similar goals. The current intersessional process offers an opportunity to identify new approaches, to enhance national implementation through voluntary exchanges of information, such as the peer review mechanism.

In follow-up to the French peer-review, the Netherlands is conducting this year a BENELUX Peer Review exercise, with Belgium and Luxembourg. We submitted a Working Paper together entitled BENELUX Peer review: outline of key features and objectives, in which we elaborate more on the modalities of the exercise. By conducting this exercise we aim to improve the national implementation of the Convention while contributing to build confidence between States Parties. We have decided to give the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) a role in our exercise. As we consider CBMs a unique instrument to help increase mutual trust and generate transparency, the CBMs will form the basis of the respective national implementation evaluation.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that the Netherlands has submitted its CBM in 2015 and this is available on the public section of the website]

The final opening statement was delivered by **Libya** at the start of the morning session on Tuesday 11 August 2015. For the benefit of readers of this report this is addressed here rather than reporting on it chronologically.

Libya spoke saying that they have participated in the meetings of the Convention since its entry into force. They recognized that prosperity came from joint action. There were many challenges such as epidemics and illness with changes in recent years as a consequence of terrorism and organized crime. International solidarity was important as were the recommendations for the Seventh and previous review Conferences. International cooperation was needed to combat terrorism.

The statement went on to emphasise the importance of cooperation and assistance particularly under Article X between developed States and the least developed States in order to combat infectious diseases. It was also important to strengthen exchanges of information on advances in science and technology. It was important to refrain from discriminatory measures that might hamper medical and agricultural applications. Libya concluded by encouraging the universal adoption of the Convention.

[The unog.ch/bwc website shows that Libya has not submitted its CBM in 2015]

On the Monday afternoon, the Chair then resumed the informal session to hear the remaining eight NGO statements. In total, the following ten NGOs spoke

- a. **University of Bradford.** Graham S Pearson.
- b. **University of London.** Filippa Lentzos.
- c. **Biosecure Ltd.** Kathryn McLaughlin.
- d. **[Ukrainian Biosafety Association & Bradford Disarmament Research Centre](#).** Tatyana Novossiolo
- e. **International Network of Engineers and Scientists.** Kathryn Nixdorff.
- f. **Biosecurity Working Group of the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues.** Ryszard Słomski
- g. **BioWeapons Prevention Project.** Gunnar Jeremias.
- h. **Research Group for Biological Arms Control, Hamburg University.** Mirko Himmel.
- i. **VERTIC.** Scott Spence.
- j. **Pax Christi International.** David Atwood.

These statements are all available at unog.ch/bwc

The Chairman then thanked the NGOs who had made statements for their contributions and constructive proposals. The meeting then went on to consider Agenda item 8 the *Biennial Item: how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties.*

In addition, it should be noted that, as at the Sixth and Seventh Review Conferences in 2006 and 2011 respectively and at the Meeting of Experts 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and in 2012, 2013 and 2014 and the Meeting of States Parties 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and in 2012, 2013 and 2014, Richard Guthrie in association with the BioWeapons Prevention Project provided daily reports on the Meeting of Experts that were made available in hard copy to the delegations as well as electronically. These reports are available at <http://www.bwpp.org>

Side Events

During the Meeting of Experts there were twelve side events. These were held at lunchtime when there were two events in parallel each day from Monday to Thursday, evening events on Monday 10 and Tuesday 11 August as well as breakfast events at 09.00 am on Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 August.

The **first** side event at lunchtime on Monday 10 August was organized by Switzerland entitled *Developments in Science & Technology Related to the BWC*. The programme was as follows:

- Opening Remarks by Ambassador Urs Schmid of Switzerland
- *Advances in Design and Use of Microbial Production Systems: A Workshop for the BWC Community* by Katherine Bowman, US National Academies of Science
- *Report of the OPCW Temporary Working Group on Verification* by Christopher Timperley, OPCW Scientific Advisory Board
- *Open Source Tools for Confidence in Compliance* by Gunnar Jeremias, Research Group for Biological Arms Control, University of Hamburg
- *BWC Reviews of S & T: 2012-2014* by Piers Millett, Biosecure.

Copies of the four presentations are available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The **second** side event was a Poster Session held in the hall outside the Conference Room following the afternoon session on Monday 10 August. Posters were exhibited by the following:

- University of Hamburg: *Open Sources Tools for Confidence in Compliance* by Gunnar Jeremias, Mirko Himmel, Jakob Hersch and Tomisha Bino
- University of Bradford: *Reviving the Intersessional Process: Achieving Effective Action* by Graham S. Pearson, Filippa Lentzos and Nicholas A. Sims

- University of Bradford: *Do No Harm: Safeguarding Science in the 21st Century* by Simon Whitby and Tatiana Novossiolova
- National Institute of Public Health, Japan: *Biosecurity Landscape in Japan* by Tomoya Saito
- Swedish Defense Research Agency: *Real Time Detection and Classification of Biological Agents using LIBS technique* by T. Tjarnhage et al.
- Centres for Bio Threat Preparedness and for Military Medicine, Finnish Defence Forces and Tanzania Veterinary Laboratory Agency, *Strengthening Health and Biosecurity in Tanzania by Biodetection Capacity Building* by Anna Katz et al.
- Australia Group, *The Australia Group*
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response: *Strengthening Global Health Security by Addressing Challenges to the International Deployment of Medical Countermeasures During Emergencies* by Lauren Barna et al.

Copies of these posters are available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The **third** side event on the morning of Tuesday 11 August from 9.00 to 10.00 am was entitled *Platform Technologies and Opportunities for Combatting Infectious Disease: A Discussion With Companies* and organized by the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO). Piers Millett of Biosecure was in the chair with Ms. Phyllis Arthur, Senior Director, Vaccines, Immunotherapeutics & Diagnostics Policy, BIO and Russell Wilson, Senior Vice President, Business development, Novovax as the speakers.

No information on this side event is available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The **fourth** and **fifth** side events were both at lunchtime on Tuesday 11 August 2015. One was entitled *Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) Health Security through action* organized by Finland. This was chaired by Professor Sinno Nikkari of Finland with the following presentations:

- Ambassador Robert Wood (USA) *GHSA in support of BWC*
- Professor Sinno Nikkari of Finland and Melissa Dahlke of Uganda *GHSA Action Packages and Pilot Country Assessments*
- Mia Kjems Draeger of Denmark and Dr. Hellen Mbugua-Kabira of Kenya *Danish Programme on Biosecurity in East Africa*
- Dr. Anna Katz of Finland and Dr. Furaha Mramba of Tanzania *Strengthening Health and Biosecurity in Tanzania*

No information on this side event is available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The other lunchtime event was *Safeguarding Science in the 21st Century: Biosecurity Textbook* organized by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Ambassador Matthew Rowland of the UK was in the chair with introductory remarks made by Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast of the Netherlands. The following presentations were made:

- Tatyana Novosiolova of the University of Bradford, UK [*Enhancing Biosecurity Education: BioSecurity Textbook*](#)
- Koos van der Bruggen of the Netherlands [*Gain-of-Function Debate A Disputed Test Case for Biosecurity Policy*](#)
- Morten Madsen of the Centre for Biosecurity, Denmark [*Biosecurity in Denmark*](#)
- Jo L. Husbands of the US National Academy of Sciences [*Biosecurity Policy and Practice: Contributions from Scientific Organizations*](#)

Copies of the four presentations are available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The **sixth** side event was held on the evening of Tuesday 11 August 2015 after the plenary session had concluded. This event was *Strengthening the BWC and improving its implementation: resuming negotiations in that regard in 2017* organised by the Russian Federation. A presentation was made by Vladimir Ladanov of the Russian Federation entitled *Proposal by the Russian Federation for inclusion in the report of the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention*.

A copy of the presentation is available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The **seventh** side event was held on the morning of Wednesday 12 August 2015 at 09.00 – 10.00 am. This was entitled *Use of Microbial Forensics in Attribution Decision Making (The Science-Policy Interface)* and was organised by the Federation of American Scientists. Two presentations were made:

- Christopher A. Bidwell, FAS and Randall S. Murch, Virginia State University *Attribution: Use of Microbial Forensics in Cases involving Illicit programs and/or Use*
- Randall S. Murch, Virginia State University *Science Supporting Attribution in the BWC Context*

Copies of both presentations are available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The **eighth** and **ninth** side events were held at lunch time on Wednesday 12 August 2015. One was entitled *National Measures to Address Dual-Use Research* organised by the United States and the Netherlands. This was chaired by Christopher Park of the USA with opening remarks given by Ambassador Henk

Cor van der Kwast of the Netherlands and Ambassador Robert Wood of the USA. Four presentations were made:

- Ms. Ayse Aydin, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Dr. Herawati Sudoyo, Indonesian Academy of Sciences
- Dr. Zalini Yunus, Science and Technology Research Institute for Defense, Malaysia
- Dr. Susan Collier-Monarez, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, USA *National Measures to Address Dual-Use Research in the United States*

A copy of one presentation – that by Dr. Susan Collier-Monarez, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, USA – is available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The other was entitled [*From the Geneva Protocol to the UNSG mechanism : Lessons Learned and Opportunities*](#) organized by UNIDIR and France. Introductory remarks were made by Louis Riquet of France and Kerstin Vignard of UNIDIR. Four presentations were made:

- Nikita Smidovich, UNODA [*The Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical, Biological or Toxin Weapons*](#)
- Col. Nicholas Coussiere of France *UNSGM Training Course in France 7 – 19 June 2015*
- Anna-Lena Johansson, Swedish Defence Research Agency, Sweden *Towards a UNSGM Biological Analysis Network*
- Dr Cedric Invernizzi, Spiez Laboratory, Spiez, Switzerland *UNSGM Designated Laboratories*

Copies of all four presentations are available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The **tenth** side event was held at 09.00 to 10.00 am on Thursday 13 August 2015. This was organized by the US delegation to make a report on the inadvertent shipment of dangerous pathogens from US laboratories which had been referred to by the US in their opening statement on Monday. Although this meeting was said to be to enhance transparency about these inadvertent shipments it was the only event during the Meeting of Experts held behind closed doors.

No information on this side event is available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The **eleventh** and **twelfth** side events were held at lunch time on Thursday 13 August. One was entitled [*The Dutch Bottom-up Approach in Raising Biosecurity Awareness: How to Reach Professionals, Students and Amateurs?*](#) organised by the Netherlands. The following presentations were made:

- Rik Bleijs Head, Netherlands Biosecurity Office, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment [*The Dutch Bottom-up Approach in Raising Biosecurity Awareness: How to Reach Professionals, Students and Amateurs?*](#)
- Saskia Rutjes, Netherlands Biosecurity Office, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment *Raising Biosecurity Awareness among Professionals*
- Cecile van der Vlugt, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment *Synthetic Biology and Biosecurity Awareness*
- Harold van der Berg Netherlands Biosecurity Office, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment *Biosecurity Self-assessment Toolkit and Vulnerability Assay*

Copies of all four presentations are available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

The other lunchtime side event was entitled *Global Health Security Agenda-Action Package Meeting: Multisectoral Rapid Response on MERS Outbreak in Korea* organised by the Republic of Korea. The following presentations were made:

- Dr. Chaeshin Chu, Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Multisectoral Rapid Response Action Package*
- Dr. Chaeshin Chu Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Epidemiological Characteristics and Multi-sectoral countermeasures of MERS-CoV Outbreak in Korea*

Copies of both presentations are available on the unog.ch/bwc website.

Biennial Item: how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties

This item was first addressed on the Monday afternoon 10 August 2014. The Chairman pointed out that discussion of this biennial topic had commenced in 2014 and he looked forward to States Parties building on and moving forward from what had been discussed then. He pointed out that two background papers had been prepared by the ISU:

- BWC/MSP/2015/MX/INF. 2 *Previous agreements and understandings under the Convention relevant to strengthening the implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties*
- BWC/MSP/2015/MX/INF. 4 and Corr. 1 *International organizations that may be involved in the provision of and coordination of assistance*

relevant to Article VII.

He then invited representatives of the following international organisations: ICRC, IFRC, OPCW, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and the World Health Organization (WHO), to take their seats on the podium in order to make their statements/presentations. Copies of the statements/presentations made by the first five organisations are available at the unog.ch/bwc website but not of the latter two.

The following Working Papers on the biennial item were submitted: BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.1 *Making Article VII effective: Some core assumptions and key questions.* (UK); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.2 *Making Article VII effective: Relevant lessons and follow-up action from the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa.* (UK); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.7 *Proposal for establishment of a database for assistance in the framework of Article VII of the Biological Weapons Convention.* (France and India); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.10 *Implementation of Article VII.* (South Africa); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.22 *Considerations of Cuba on how to strengthen the implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation of States parties.* (Cuba).

The Chairman closed the afternoon session saying that this agenda item would be considered again on Friday morning allowing time for reflection. The formal session would resume on Tuesday morning at 10.00 am with consideration of Agenda Item 5 on the Standing Agenda item on Cooperation and Assistance. He then invited the Secretary to make some remarks – the Secretary said that the Poster Session would follow immediately outside the Conference room and thanked the United States for providing refreshments for those attending the Poster Session. He also said that there would be a side event on Tuesday morning at 09.00 organised by the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO).

Standing Agenda item on Cooperation and Assistance

Consideration of this Standing Agenda Item commenced on the Tuesday morning and continued through to the afternoon session. The programme of work (BWC/MSP/2015/MX/2/Rev.1) invited States Parties to make general statements on this SAI item on the Tuesday morning with statements on the first four subtopics in the morning session and the remaining three subtopics in the afternoon session. Statements by the international organisations and guests of the meeting were made at the start of the afternoon session. Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia took the chair for the morning session and the Vice-Chair, Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast of the Netherlands took the chair for the afternoon session.

General statements on the overall topic were made by Iran on behalf of the

NAM, Ukraine, Russia, China, Tunisia (for Germany and Tunisia), Ecuador, India, Georgia, USA, Australia and Ghana. Under the various sub-topics, statements were made by the ISU, Malaysia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Iran (national capacity), UK, Netherlands, Cuba, Kenya, Italy and India. The statements made by Iran on behalf of the NAM, Russia, Malaysia, Japan, India and the USA are available at unog.ch/bwc.

The afternoon session on Tuesday 5 August continued the consideration of the Standing Agenda Item on Cooperation and Assistance. It started with presentations by an international organisation and then by guests of the meeting: OIE, The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) (also speaking on behalf of the IAP), the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) and Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network (DCVMN). Copies of the statement/presentations made by the OIE, TWAS and BIO are available at the unog.ch/bwc website.

The ISU introduced its background paper: BWC/MSP/2015/MX/INF.3 *Background information on continuing challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange*. The following Working Papers and Information documents relating to this SAI were introduced: BWC/MSP/2015/MX/INF.1 *2014 Implementation of BWC Article X (Cooperation and Assistance)*. (Australia); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.4 *The United States of America high containment laboratory policy* (USA); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.21 *Cuban experiences with the implementation of Article X of the BTWC* (Cuba); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.23 *International cooperation offers and requests to the International Cooperation Database under Article X of the BTWC* (Cuba).

This concluded the afternoon session which was adjourned at 1715. The Chair said that the formal session would continue on Wednesday 12 August at 10.00 am with consideration of the Standing Agenda item on *Advances in Science and Technology*. The Secretary said that there would be a side event on *Strengthening the BWC and improving its implementation: resuming negotiations in that regard in 2017* organized by the Russian Federation immediately after the end of this session and also there would be a side event on Wednesday morning at 09.00 on *Use of Microbial Forensics in Attribution Decision Making (The Science-Policy Interface)* organised by the Federation of American Scientists (FAS).

Standing Agenda Item on Science and Technology

The morning started with Russia exercising a right of reply to respond to remarks made by Ukraine on Tuesday that a biosecurity problem had resulted from the loss of an anti-plague laboratory and a diagnostic laboratory in the Crimea as well as with loss of control of territory in the south-east of the country. Russia used its right of reply to outline the view of its government that the current government in Kiev was not legitimate. Ukraine requested a right

of reply to the Russian reply, which prompted a further reply in return. The Chair attempted to ensure that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, that *the reply shall be as brief as possible* {Rule 19}.

The formal session went on to consider the Standing Agenda Item on *Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention* with a particular focus on *advances in production, dispersal and delivery technologies on biological agents and toxins*. The morning session began with general statements and then focussed on

- *New science and technology developments that have potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention;*
- *New science and technology developments that have potential benefits for the Convention, including those of special relevance to disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation;*
- *Voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct by scientists, academia and industry;*
- *Education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology;*

Statements/presentations were then made by Iran (on behalf of the NAM), Switzerland, India, Russia, China, USA, Cuba, Australia UK and Netherlands. The statements made by Iran (on behalf of the NAM), Switzerland, Russia and the UK are available at the unog.ch/bwc website together with the presentation made by Switzerland.

The afternoon session on Wednesday 6 August continued the consideration of the Standing Agenda item on *Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention* with a particular focus on:

- *Science and technology-related developments relevant to the activities of multilateral organizations such as the WHO, OIE, FAO, IPPC and OPCW;*
- *Possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management, as appropriate, in research and development involving new science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention.*
- *Any other science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention.*

Presentations were made by the Scientific Advisory Board of the OPCW and then by guests of the meeting, the CDC Uganda Virus Research Institute, the Inter-Academy Panel and the Georgia Institute of Technology. Copies of the statement/presentations made by the SAB of the OPCW, the Inter-Academy Panel and the Georgia Institute of Technology are available at the unog.ch/bwc website.

It is notable that unusually the ISU did not produce a background paper on advances in science and technology – presumably because of the delay in filling the vacancies in the ISU. The following Working Papers relating to this SAI were introduced: BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.5 *Advances in science and technology: Production and delivery.* (USA); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.6 *Tacit knowledge: The concept and its implications for biological weapons proliferation.* (USA); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.8 and Corr.1 *Convergence between biology and chemistry: Latest findings of relevance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.* (Switzerland); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.9 *Advances in science and technology: impact on response to infectious disease outbreaks and relevance to Article VII.* (UK); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.11 *Reviewing developments in science and technology: Parameters and considerations for a dedicated process.* (Switzerland); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.12/Rev.1 *Advances in science and technology: Production, dispersal and delivery technologies* (UK); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.15 *Review of developments in the field of science and technology and Article X of the Convention.* (Iran).

A first draft of the procedural section of the report of the meeting, BWC/MSP/2015/ MX/CRP.1, was circulated during the day.

Standing Agenda Item on Strengthening National Implementation

On the Thursday morning the Chair moved on to consideration of the Standing Agenda Item on *Strengthening national implementation* with a particular focus in the morning session on:

- *A range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, especially Articles III and IV;*
- *Ways and means to enhance national implementation, sharing best practices and experiences, including the voluntary exchange of information among States Parties on their national implementation, enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions;*
- *Regional and sub-regional cooperation that can assist national implementation of the Convention.*

and in the afternoon session on:

- *National, regional and international measures to improve laboratory biosafety and security of pathogens and toxins;*
- *Any potential further measures, as appropriate, relevant for implementation of the Convention.*

Statements/presentations were made by Iran (on behalf of the NAM), UK, Spain, Mongolia, Burundi, Canada, Australia, Japan, Cameroon, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, China, Switzerland, India, Ecuador, Cuba, USA, France, Iraq,

the Netherlands and Colombia. The statements made by Iran (on behalf of the NAM), UK, Russia, Malaysia, Switzerland, India, USA and the Netherlands are available at the unog.ch/bwc website together with the presentation made by France.

The afternoon session started with presentations from three international organisations and two guests of the meeting: the UN 1540 Committee, UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Bradford Disarmament Research Centre and VERTIC. Copies of all five presentations/statements are available at the unog.ch/bwc website.

The following Working Papers relating to this SAI were introduced: BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.13/Rev.1 *BENELUX BTWC Peer Review: Outline of key features and objectives*. (Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.14 *Proposal by the Russian Federation for inclusion in the final document of the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention*. (Russian Federation); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.16 *Providing Reassurance on Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Implementation*. (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Republic of Korea and Thailand); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.17 *Considerations and measures to improve biosecurity of materials and biological agents and of the activities associated with them and the biological facilities* (Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Italy, Panama and Spain); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.18 and Corr.1 *Measures to implement Article III: Elements of an effective national export control system*. (Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, UK and USA); BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.19 *National Measures to Address Dual Use Research*. (Indonesia, Malaysia, Netherlands and USA);

During Thursday, copies of BWC/MSP/2015/MX/CRP. 2, the first draft of the Annex to the report of the meeting containing proposals and suggestions put forward at the meeting was circulated. This contained proposals for the Standing Agenda Items on Cooperation and Assistance and on Advances in Science and Technology as well as for the Biennial Item on Article VII.

Biennial Item: how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties

Further consideration was given on the Friday morning to the Biennial Item on *how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of*

detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties. Statements were made by Iran (on behalf of the NAM), Russia, France, India, UK, South Africa, Canada, Switzerland, Philippines, Cuba, China, Pakistan, USA, Australia, Iran (national), Belarus, and the Netherlands. A presentation was made at the end of the morning by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs on the UN Secretary General's mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of chemical, biological or toxin weapons.

The statements made by Iran (on behalf of NAM), India, UK, Switzerland, Pakistan, USA and the Netherlands are available at the unog.ch/bwc website together with a copy of the UNODA presentation..

Closing Session: Adoption of the factual report reflecting the deliberations of the meeting

On Friday afternoon the meeting considered the following material:

- a. BWC/MSP/2015/MX/CRP.1 *Draft report of the Meeting of Experts*
- b. BWC/MSP/2015/MX/CRP.2 *Draft elements for the compilation of the considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the topics under discussion at the Meeting* [This covers material presented on the afternoon of Monday 10 August and on Tuesday 11 August and on Wednesday 12 August – i.e. proposals for the Standing Agenda Items on Cooperation and Assistance and on Advances in Science and Technology as well as for the Biennial Item on Article VII]
- c. BWC/MSP/2014/MX/CRP.3 *Draft elements for the compilation of the considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the topics under discussion at the Meeting* [This covers material presented on Thursday 13 August on the Standing Agenda item on Strengthening National Implementation]

The Chair said that draft elements covering the session on Friday morning would be made available on the unog.ch/bwc website by the end of Friday. This appeared as:

- d. Draft elements covering the second part of the Article VII agenda item on Friday 14 August 2015.

The Chair emphasised that these draft elements and those already made available in CRP.2 and CRP.3 were initial versions and not final. He said he had already received several requests for modification and announced that any

alterations, additions or deletions should be communicated to the Secretariat by the close of business on Tuesday 18 August 2015. He said that the intention was to have an advance version of the report of the meeting and its Annexes available on the unog.ch/bwc website on Thursday 20 August.

He then reviewed the draft report as in CRP.1 section by section. In doing so he reminded delegations that Annex I was prepared under his own responsibility and initiative and was not agreed and had no status. It was agreed that CRP.1 was adopted.

The Chair then made some concluding remarks saying that it had been a fruitful, positive and constructive meeting which had covered a huge range of material. He thanked delegations for responding to his call to focus on effective action. He then thanked everyone involved in the meeting for their contributions and said that it was encouraging to hear several new voices. He went on to say that as in previous years he would prepare a synthesis paper for the Meeting of States Parties.

The meeting then closed at 15.30 pm.

[It should be noted that whilst all four of the documents identified as a. to d. above appeared on the unog.ch/bwc website prior to the advance version of the final report BWC/MSP/2015/MX/3 becoming available, only the first three are listed in Annex II to the Report of the Meeting of Experts and none are now available on the unog.ch/bwc website or elsewhere]

Outcome of the Meeting of Experts

During the Meeting of Experts, 23 Working Papers (10 more than at MX/2014) were submitted by 7 States Parties and 7 on behalf of seven groups of States Parties with the numbers submitted by individual States Parties ranging from one to four: Cuba (20, 21, 22, 23), Iran (15), Russian Federation (14), South Africa (10), Switzerland (8, 11), United Kingdom (1, 2, 9, 12) and United States (4, 5, 6). The papers submitted by groups of States Parties were one each by the following: Belarus and Russian Federation (3), France and India (7), Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (13), Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Italy and Panama (17), Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands and USA (19), Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Republic of Korea and Thailand (16) and Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, UK and USA (18). In addition, Australia submitted an Information Paper, BWC/MSP/2014/MX/INF. 1 entitled *2014 Implementation of BWC Article X (Cooperation and Assistance)*.

One working paper related to the adoption of the Programme of Work – WP. 3 (Belarus and Russia) *Improving methods of work at the BWC meetings*; this was clearly submitted with a view towards the Eighth Review Conference in 2016 and decisions that might be taken then, three for the Standing Agenda Item on Cooperation and assistance – WP. 4 (USA), WP. 21 (Cuba), WP. 23 (Cuba) – seven for the Standing Agenda Item on developments in science and technology – WP. 5 (USA), WP. 6 (USA), WP. 8 (Switzerland), WP. 9 (UK), WP. 11 (Switzerland), WP.12 (USA), WP. 15 (Iran) – six for the Standing Agenda item on strengthening national implementation – WP. 13 (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), WP. 14 (Russia), WP. 16 (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Republic of Korea and Thailand), WP. 17 (Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Italy and Panama), WP. 18 (Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, UK and USA), WP. 19 (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands and USA) – and five to the biennial item on Article VII of the Convention - WP. 1 (UK), WP. 2 (UK), WP. 7 (France and India), WP. 10 (South Africa), WP. 22 (Cuba).

The difference from MX/2014 was the increase of 10 in the number of Working Papers and the submission of seven Working Papers by seven new groups of States Parties: one by Belarus and Russia; one by France and India; one by Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; one by Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Republic of Korea and Thailand; one by Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Italy and Panama; one by Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, UK and USA; and one by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands and USA. The five working papers with sponsors that extend across Group boundaries are particularly to be welcomed. Such crossing of Group boundaries is vital to strengthening the Convention as it demonstrates that States Parties do share common objectives and aspirations.

There were no Working Papers submitted on behalf of the NAM or on behalf of the JACKSNNZ group.

As noted above, on Thursday and on Friday morning and at 18.00 on Friday, preliminary compilations (CRP.2, CRP. 3, Draft elements covering the second part of the Article VII agenda item on Friday 14 August 2015) of the proposals made at the Meeting of Experts were circulated. Participants at MX/2014 were advised that any corrections should be notified to the ISU by email (to bwc@unog.ch) by 18.00 pm local time on Tuesday 12 August 2014. An updated version was subsequently issued as Annex 1 to the report of the

meeting (MX.3). These were helpfully grouped under subheadings.

These subheadings essentially follow the proposals made in the Chair's letter of 27 May and promulgated as the provisional programme of work in MSP/2015/MX/2 dated 26 May 2015. There are three variations to the subheadings in Annex I. In regard to the Standing Agenda Item on Cooperation and Assistance, there is no section with the subheading of the first sub-topic discussed under this Standing Agenda Item:

Reports by States Parties on their implementation of Article X, and reports by the ISU on the operation of the database system to facilitate assistance requests and offers;

This followed the practice that appears to have been followed at MX/2012, MX/2013 and again at MX/2014 when the same divergence from the sub-topics listed in the provisional programme of work in MSP/2014/MX/2 occurred.

The second and third variations related to the Standing Agenda Item on Advances in Science and Technology. Although the Chair's letter of 27 May 2015 and the provisional programme of work in MX/2015/MX/2 showed this Standing Agenda Item as being:

Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention (agenda item 6), focusing on advances in production, dispersal and delivery technologies of biological agents and toxins:

This is amended in Annex I so that the Standing Agenda Item reads as:

Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention

with the first sub-item being:

1. Advances in production, dispersal and delivery technologies of biological agents and toxins

The second variation related to the sub-item:

Possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management, as appropriate, in research and development involving new science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention.

which is shown in the Chair's letter of 27 May 2015 and the provisional programme of work in MX/2015/MX/2 as being the sixth sub-item for this

Standing Agenda Item, this appears in Annex I as the third sub-item

An analysis of the 369 proposals in the tabulation below shows that they came from 32 States Parties, 7 international organizations and 7 guests of the meeting together with proposals from Working Papers submitted by groups of States Parties, namely: WP. 3 (Belarus and Russian Federation), WP. 7 (France and India), WP.13 (Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands), WP. 16 (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Republic of Korea and Thailand), WP. 17 (Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Italy and Panama), WP.18 (Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, UK and USA), and WP.19 (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands and USA). The largest number of proposals at MX/2015 came from the United Kingdom (54 proposals). Other major contributors were the United States (35), Iran (on behalf of the NAM) (32), India (26), Cuba (18), Switzerland (18), Netherlands (15), China (11), Iran (10), and Russia (10).

From the thirteen international organizations, proposals came from seven: ICRC (5), OIE (4), OPCW (3), EU (3), UNISDR (2), UNODA (2), the UN 1540 Committee (1), and UNCTITF (1); – none came from the WHO, INTERPOL, IFRC, UNICRI or UNIDIR. From the eight guests of the meeting, proposals came from seven: TVAS (6), BIO (3), DCVMN (3), VERTIC (3), University of Bradford (2), Georgia Institute of Technology (1) and IAP (1) – none came from the Centers for Disease Control Uganda Virus Research Institute. In the tabulation below the numbers of proposals made by each State Party, by each international organization, and by each guest of the meeting are shown for each of the six subheadings for cooperation and assistance (C &A), the eight subheadings for science and technology (S & T), and the five subheadings for strengthening national implementation (SNI) as well as for the biennial topic on Article VII.

State	C & A 1	C & A 2	C & A 3	C & A 4	C & A 5	C & A 6	S & T 1	S & T 2	S & T 3	S & T 4	S & T 5	S & T 6	S & T 7	S & T 8	SNI 1	SNI 2	SNI 3	SNI 4	SNI 5	Art VII	Total	
Argentina												1				1						2
Australia															1				1	3		5
Bangladesh		3																				3
Belarus																				2		2
Brazil	3							1											3			7
Burundi																1	1					2
Cameroon																			1			1
Canada															1	1				2		4
China	1							1								1		2	2	4		11
Colombia															1							1
Cuba	3	3		2	1						1			3	1				2	2		18
Denmark										1						2						3
Ecuador	1	1									2											4
France																		3	1	1		5

Ghana	1	1	4																	6	
India	4	1	1				1			1				1	2	1			4	10	26
Iran (NAM)	3	3	1	1	1	1		1	2		2			2	3	2			3	7	32
Iran	2	3							3											2	10
Italy	1															1			1	2	5
Japan		1	1													1					3
Kenya																	1				1
Malaysia		2																1			3
Mexico																1					1
Mongolia															1						1
Netherlands						1				1	1	1				2		3	5	1	15
Pakistan	1							2						1						3	7
Rep of Korea																1					1
Russian Fedn		2	1					1		1									2	3	10

South Africa																				4	4	
Switzerland								1	2				3	6		1			2	3	18	
Ukraine					1														1		2	
UK	1	1					5	1	2	1	1		1	2		2			1	36	54	
USA	2	1	1		5	1	4	1						7	1	2			3	7	35	
Total	23	22	9	3	8	3	10	9	9	5	7	2	4	22	11	20	2	9	32	92	302	
(No. of States)	(12)	(12)	(6)	(2)	(4)	(3)	(3)	(8)	(4)	(5)	(5)	(2)	(2)	(7)	(8)	(15)	(2)	(4)	(15)	(17)	(32)	
	C & A 1	C & A 2	C & A 3	C & A 4	C & A 5	C & A 6	S & T 1	S & T 2	S & T 3	S & T 4	S & T 5	S & T 6	S & T 7	S & T 8	SNI 1	SNI 2	SNI 3	SNI 4	SNI 5	Art VII	Total	
WP. 3 States																				6	6	
WP. 7 States																					4	4
WP. 13 States																				3	3	
WP. 16 States															1	2				2	5	

WP. 17 States																		4			4
WP. 18 States														1							1
WP. 19 States								1		1								2			4
EU																		1		2	3
OIE						3													1		4
ICRC																				5	5
OPCW													1							2	3
1540 Cttee																			1		1
UNCTIF																				1	1
UNISDR																				2	2
UNODA																				2	2

BIO						3															3
DCVMN						3															3
Georgia Inst T									1												1
IAP														1							1
TWAS				2	1	3															6
U of Bradford															1				1		2
VERTIC																				3	3
Total	23	22	9	5	9	15	10	10	10	6	7	2	5	23	14	22	2	17	48	110	369

A comparison of the proposals that appeared in Annex I to BWC/MSP/2015/MX/3 and those included in CRP. 2, CRP. 3 and *Draft elements covering the second part of the Article VII agenda item on Friday 14 August 2015* documents shows which States Parties took advantage of the opportunity provided to make modifications to the proposals attributed to them between the end of the Meeting of Experts on Friday 14 August 2015 and the deadline stated by the Chair of submitting any amendments by the close of play on Tuesday 19 August 2015. These were Brazil, Burundi, China, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Iran (on behalf of the NAM), Iran, Netherlands, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United States – some 12 of the 32 States Parties making an additional 54 proposals.

A comparison of the 369 proposals that appeared in Annex I to BWC/MSP/2015/MX/3 and the 464 that appeared in 2014 in Annex I to BWC/MSP/2014/MX/3 shows that the approach to listing proposals may reflect the change in staffing of the ISU so the total of 369 proposals in 2015 is not necessarily as different from the total of 464 in 2014 as might appear at first sight. Much depends upon how proposals are aggregated or disaggregated for inclusion in Annex I.

Although at MX/2015, 32 States Parties submitted 302 proposals (in comparison to the 28 States Parties and one State Signatory that submitted 408 proposals at MX/2014), a significant difference in the involvement of States Parties in submitting proposals at MX/2015 was evident from consideration of the proposals taken from co-authored Working Papers. At MX/2015, proposals were taken from WP. 3, WP. 7, WP. 13, WP. 16, WP. 15, WP. 18 and WP. 19; this added a further 30 States Parties to the 32 States Parties whose proposals had come from statements, interventions or Working Papers solely authored by that State Party. At MX/2014 only 4 States Parties were added through co-authored Working Papers. Consequently at MX/2015, proposals for Annex I came from 62 States Parties almost double the proposals from 32 States Parties and one State Signatory at MX/2014.

In regard to the international organizations, the number of proposals recorded in Annex I in 2015 was 21 from eight international organisations (EU, OIE, ICRC, OPCW, 1540 Committee, UNCTITF, UNISDR and UNODA) compared to 24 in 2014 from seven international organizations (EU, UNODA, ICRC, OCHA, OIE, OPCW and WHO). And for guests of the meeting, 19 proposals were made in 2015 by seven of the eight guests of the meeting compared to 6 from two of the four guests of the meeting in 2014.

As in previous years, the Chair has said that, for the Meeting of States Parties, he would create a synthesis paper that distills the essence of the many ideas and proposals contained in Annex I to the report of the Meeting of Experts.

The substantive paragraphs to be adopted by the Meeting of States Parties for each of the Standing Agenda Item topics will need to be looking forward not only to what the States Parties may do at MSP/2015 as a cohesive entity but also to what direction the

further consideration of these topics should take at the Review Conference in 2016. Particular attention also needs to be given to the cross fertilization between the elements of the Standing Agenda items. For example, the Standing Agenda item on science and technology includes the sub-item:

5. Education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology

which is closely related to the sub-item of the Standing Agenda item on national implementation which reads:

1. A range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, especially Articles III and IV

Another example relates to the Standing Agenda item on cooperation and assistance which has a sub-item:

5. Capacity-building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity, and for detecting, reporting, and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation

which is closely related to the sub-item of the Standing Agenda item on national implementation which reads:

4. National, regional and international measures to improve laboratory biosafety and security of pathogens and toxins;

As we recommended last year in our report on MX/2014, the solution is probably for the substantive paragraphs in the report of the Meeting of States Parties to avoid any reference to the sub-items and to focus on what is relevant to the totality of each of the Standing Agenda items as well as to how these inter-relate as an integrated approach is vital for maximizing and realizing the benefits in the strengthening of the Convention. Whilst the substantive paragraphs in the report of the Meeting of States Parties, as at MSP/2014, are likely to be listed under the individual Standing Agenda items, consideration could usefully be given to also having some substantive paragraphs that address material that relates to more than one Standing Agenda item thereby helping to promote an integrated and comprehensive approach. This would be particularly valuable in helping to prepare for the Review Conference in 2016

Reflections

The Chair for 2015, Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia, made it clear from the outset in his first letter to States Parties on 11 February 2015 that his intention is *to work with States Parties to build on the solid platform we have created together and to create a strong foundation for the Eighth Review Conference*. It was evident at MX/2015 from the opening statements and the Working Papers submitted that many States Parties are also looking forward to the Review Conference and are keen to do what they can to help achieve a successful outcome of the Eighth Review Conference that effectively strengthens the Convention and improves its implementation.

It was also significant and encouraging that the number of States Parties who have contributed to the points in Annex I to the report of MX/2015 either in statements, interventions or Working Papers rose to some 62 States Parties – almost double the corresponding number of the proposals from 32 States Parties and 1 State Signatory at MX/2014. This increase arises from the submission in 2015 of Working Papers co-authored by States Parties that frequently cross Group boundaries: the co-authored Working Papers in 2015 came from: WP. 3 (Belarus and Russian Federation) on improving BTWC meetings, WP. 7 (France and India) on an Article VII database, WP.13 (Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands) on peer review, WP. 16 (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Republic of Korea and Thailand) on providing reassurance, WP. 17 (Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Italy and Panama) on biosecurity, WP.18 (Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, UK and USA) on Article III, and WP.19 (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands and USA) on dual-use activities. Five of these seven co-authored papers cross Group boundaries. This makes it increasingly evident that States Parties share a common position in regard to activities such as education, outreach, biosafety and biosecurity and thus to strengthening and improving the implementation of the Convention.

The attention being paid to reassurance is particularly welcome. As Working Paper No. 16 says in its introduction:

*The overall aim of this working paper is to raise awareness among relevant national officials and experts on the importance of providing reassurance that States Parties are **fully** implementing **all** provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) effectively. [Emphasis added]*

This objective is thus closely similar to the opening point made by Iran on behalf of the NAM which *highlighted that the BTWC forms a **whole** and that, although it is possible to consider certain aspects separately, it is critical to deal with **all of the issues** interrelated to this Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner.* [Emphasis added].

Similarly, the statement made by Switzerland in considering the Standing Agenda Item on Strengthening National Implementation makes it clear that:

*Switzerland welcomes initiatives of recent years that seek to strengthen the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention. We believe that **effective implementation and compliance** are very important issues for the sustainability of the BWC. **The Convention is in need of stronger mechanisms for resolving concerns about its implementation and about States Parties' compliance with its provisions.** The 8th Review Conference will provide the opportunity to address this question in its many aspects. It will be important to explore the **different options** in this area ahead of the Review Conference so that it is in a position to make the necessary decision. In this context, we thank those delegations that have already submitted proposals in this area, which provide important food for thought.* [Emphasis added].

The same statement goes on to welcome Working Paper No. 16 on reassurance and says that Switzerland fully aligns itself with the notion on the importance of providing reassurance to other States Parties that the basic obligations of the BWC are being met. Switzerland observes that *as stated in the paper, offering such reassurances can take different forms.*

States Parties are therefore to be encouraged to explore the different options such as peer-review, compliance assessment and providing reassurance. These and other transparency measures can be applauded as innovations undertaken by States Parties on their own initiative. They do not make exclusive claims to be the only way forward, or seek to impose obligations on other States Parties, but contribute to strengthening the Convention as it stands, whether or not it may eventually be supplemented by a new instrument. In this connection it is noteworthy that Pakistan in its opening statement, while reiterating its support for the negotiation of such an instrument, said *Pakistan, however, does not want to use the difference of opinion among states parties over the need for a legally binding Protocol, including on verification provisions, as a pretext for stalling progress on other issues in the BWC.* There is consequently considerable advantage to focus on strengthening the Convention and improving its implementation by exploring the various options. It needs to be recognized that the international scene has moved on since 2001 and that what is needed today is to take a fresh look at the options for strengthening the Convention and improving its implementation. It is evident that the majority of States Parties do quite rightly see the Convention as a whole and recognize that no one aspect can be considered in isolation whether that be Article III or

Article X. It would be irresponsible for a State Party to provide information or material under Article X without previously assuring themselves that the recipient State Party had effective national implementation measures and export controls. The Convention indeed needs to be considered and implemented as a whole. It is thus encouraging that the proposal made by the Russian Federation in its Working Paper No. 14 states that: *The objective of this Open-ended working group shall be to elaborate on a basis of consensus **appropriate measures** and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention to be included, **as appropriate**, in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States Parties.* [Emphasis added] and does not presuppose what measures are appropriate or which are appropriate for inclusion in a legally binding instrument. This emphasis on appropriateness and a range of options is to be welcomed as uniting those who support the Russian proposal for a fresh negotiation on the basis of the 1994 mandate and those who favour other ways forward from the Eighth Review Conference, all with the same aim of strengthening the Convention. Open-mindedness as to the future pattern of work and an inclusive approach to welcoming proposals from all quarters will conduce to a successful outcome in November 2016.

In our report on MX/2014¹ a year ago, we said:

Another area in which the Meeting of Experts has shown a clear way forward for the Meeting of States Parties is in improving arrangements for the review of relevant developments in science and technology (S&T). Increasing support was evident for a proposed Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) as the forum to which S&T review should be entrusted. An OEWG would be more effective in providing systematic and comprehensive review of S&T than the present intersessional arrangement, constrained as it is by pressure on time to give very limited attention to each of a long list of sub-items and topical scientific subjects agreed in 2011. The Eighth Review Conference will, however, only reach agreement on setting up an OEWG if the proposal is very thoroughly prepared and brought forward by a wide-ranging coalition of States Parties crossing the boundaries of the established Groups. Demonstrating the broad support for an OEWG on S & T is the key next step. The Meeting of States Parties could usefully propel the OEWG proposal forward by elaborating the detailed case for systematic and comprehensive review of S&T developments and by showing why such review conducted by an OEWG would be an improvement on the present S&T review procedures. It should also, in any case, recommend to the Eighth

¹ Graham S. Pearson and Nicholas A. Sims, *Report from Geneva: The Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of Experts August 2014*, Review no. 40, October 2014. Available at: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/spru/hsp/Reports%20from%20Geneva/HSP%20Reports%20from%20Geneva%20No.%2040.pdf> and at [http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/6C90EE795A114264C1257E2F0030B2BF?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/6C90EE795A114264C1257E2F0030B2BF?OpenDocument)

Review Conference the allocation of more adequate time for S&T review at the Conference itself and in each of the five years following.

Our hopes for further progress at MSP/2014 regrettably did not materialise and in our report on MSP/2014² we said:

A further disappointment is that ideas put forward at the Meeting of Experts regarding how consideration of advances in science and technology could be better addressed also did not move forward. It is evident from this Intersessional Programme that the consideration of relevant advances in science and technology is not effective – and that a new and different approach needs to be taken, such as an open-ended working group of experts. However, such ideas need to be developed in working papers which ideally should be submitted by a number of States Parties from across the regional groups.

In our Bradford Briefing Paper No. 11 entitled *Reviving The Intersessional Process: Achieving Effective Action*³ issued in July 2015, we urged that:

*19. Our view is that States Parties do indeed need to start considering **now** how best at the Eighth Review Conference to achieve an effective arrangement to adequately address relevant developments in science and technology. We consider that key elements are the following:*

- An open-ended working group to consider the implications of advances in science and technology, including the convergence of chemistry and biology; [An open-ended working group is recommended as such a group is then open to all States Parties.]*
- The open-ended working group should meet for one week each year.*
- The chair and two vice-chairs of the open-ended working group should be appointed for four years to provide continuity.*
- The open-ended working group should be mandated to take decisions to ensure that all States Parties address relevant developments in science and technology in their implementation of the Convention*

² Graham S. Pearson and Nicholas A. Sims, *Report from Geneva: The Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties December 2014*, Review no. 41, March 2015. Available at: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/spru/hsp/Reports%20from%20Geneva/HSP%20Reports%20from%20Geneva%20No.%2041.pdf> and at [http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/87CF9BFD24A8D05FC1257574004B285B?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/87CF9BFD24A8D05FC1257574004B285B?OpenDocument)

³ Graham S. Pearson, Filippa Lentzos and Nicholas A. Sims, *Reviving The Intersessional Process: Achieving Effective Action*, Bradford Briefing Paper No. 11 (Third Series), July 2015. Available at http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/sbtwc/briefing/three_bw_briefing.htm and at [http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/6C90EE795A114264C1257E2F0030B2BF?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/6C90EE795A114264C1257E2F0030B2BF?OpenDocument)

- *The open-ended working group should be mandated to submit a report each year to the Implementation Support Unit for circulation to all States Parties.*

It was consequently encouraging to see that Switzerland in Working Paper No. 11 entitled *Reviewing developments in science and technology: Parameters and considerations for a dedicated process* has identified parameters and considerations which it believes would shape any arrangement for reviewing S & T developments relevant to the BTWC. This Working Paper states that *This paper is intended as a starting point and we are keen to work with States Parties and technical experts to develop more fully the ideas presented below.* It concludes by saying:

12. Switzerland stands ready to work with all States Parties on this issue. During this meeting and as part of our preparations for the Meeting of States Parties, Switzerland will continue to consult with delegations, technical experts, the scientific community and the ISU on parameters and considerations which would shape such a process. We hope that a shared view on these parameters and considerations would help us consider what models and approaches would take them into account, and what a more effective and sustainable process would look like.

We strongly encourage this initiative and hope that Switzerland will succeed in submitting to MSP/2015 a co-authored Working Paper crossing Group boundaries on such an Open-Ended Working Group on science and technology. It is important that the report of MSP/2015 should include a clear recommendation to the Eighth Review Conference on the subject of the future review of science and technology.

States Parties are very much to be encouraged to use the time remaining prior to the Eighth Review Conference to explore the various options and to develop those that are promising in co-authored Working Papers that cross Group boundaries as these will have good prospects for being adopted at the Eighth Review Conference. Without wide-ranging discussion before the Review Conference commences in 2016, these matters will not be ripe for resolution at the Eighth Review Conference, which would be an opportunity missed – or rather a whole set of opportunities missed – for strengthening the Convention.



HSP is an inter-university collaboration for research, communication and training in support of informed public policy towards chemical and biological weapons. The Program links research groups at Harvard University in the United States and the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. It began formally in 1990, building on two decades of earlier collaboration between its founding co-directors.

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