



NEW ZEALAND

**SIXTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT,
PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL)
AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

GENERAL DEBATE

**Statement by Charlotte Darlow,
Deputy Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament**

21 November 2006

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr President

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is a cornerstone of the international security regime, and a key tool in global efforts to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction. New Zealand is firmly committed to achieving the objectives of the Convention, and will be working with all States Parties to strengthen the implementation of the Convention at this Review Conference.

Mr President

New Zealand welcomes your proposed programme of work that would see this meeting undertake in tandem both an article-by-article review of the Convention, which in my delegation's view is much needed and long overdue, and the many cross-cutting issues that States Parties will consider will contribute to a stronger biological weapons control regime.

New Zealand welcomes the proposals that have been raised by other States Parties which are aimed at strengthening the Convention. We support efforts to encourage greater universality and national implementation of the Convention. We also support strengthening the implementation support capacity for the Treaty, especially because we must not lose sight of capacity constraints that may hinder small developing countries' implementation efforts.

New Zealand remains convinced that achieving a legally binding verification mechanism for the Convention should remain a key goal. Pending the successful conclusion of any verification protocol, confidence building measures have an important role to play in enhancing transparency with respect to States Parties' compliance with the Convention. New Zealand is committed to working with other States Parties on measures for strengthening the CBMs mechanism.

New Zealand strongly believes in the value of an intersessional process between Review Conferences, and we have prepared a paper on possible topics for consideration during the next review cycle. The meetings held in the 2003-2005 period demonstrated the constructive role such a process can play in maintaining momentum on practical efforts to support BWC implementation between Review Conferences.

Intersessional meetings can address issues in more depth and can consider recent developments and innovations. These meetings can also facilitate active participation of relevant experts and international agencies in the technical details of the Convention's work. Given the potential of these meetings to contribute to the strengthening and implementation of the Convention as a whole, New Zealand hopes that this meeting will agree to the continuation of intersessional meetings during the next review cycle.

Mr President

Advances in life sciences and biotechnology, coupled with increased concerns over the threat of bio-terrorism, mean that that this meeting is being held at an important juncture. It is vital that the Convention remains relevant and ready to meet these challenges. States must work together to agree a pragmatic process which would enhance our collective security. New Zealand looks forward to working with all States Parties towards this goal. We must not squander this opportunity.

Thank you Mr President.