



NORWAY

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**GENERAL STATEMENT BY NORWAY TO THE 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**

BY

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Mr President,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your welcome election as President of this important Review Conference. We appreciated the skilful way you guided our deliberations in the Preparatory Committee earlier this year, and we have been impressed by your preparations for this Conference. This bodes well for a constructive outcome.

This Review Conference provides us with an opportunity to demonstrate that multilateralism is working in the disarmament and non-proliferation sphere. We would urge all delegations to do their utmost to reach consensus on an outcome document.

An outcome document is, however, not an aim in itself. We must seek a forward-looking consensus which will help the international community to deal with the growing risk of the hostile use of biological materials. We must consolidate the norms set out in the Convention and the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Our goal must be consensus plus.

In this respect it is important that we base our deliberations on the good work done under the work programme adopted in 2002. In recent years, States Parties have benefited from exchanging views and experience in vital areas. This process has been essential in helping us to forge a greater common understanding of how to deal with important security challenges.

We must build on this positive momentum. We must learn from the experience gained in the context of other arms control treaties, and adapt the BTWC as appropriate.

Together with like-minded countries, Norway will advocate the adoption of practical, implementable measures to further strengthen the BTWC and boost its efficiency.

I would like to mention briefly of Norway's main priorities for this Review Conference:

- We need an intersessional programme of work, to allow States Parties to address both existing and emerging challenges. The three weeks of this Review Conference will be insufficient to deal with all of the complex issues that need to be considered.
- We need to refine and improve the confidence-building measures. We must explore ways to enhance the reporting culture. Reporting should be considered an obligation and not an option, and more countries should provide annual reports.
- We must clearly make greater efforts to universalise the BTWC. Here we have much to learn from the Chemical Weapons Convention and other arms control treaties. We should agree on a strategy in this area for the next intersessional period.

- Likewise, we should draw on CWC experience in promoting national implementation, including export controls. The obligation to promote national implementation is also clearly stated in Security Council resolution 1540. National implementation and export controls should be the subject of a work programme for the next intersessional period.
- We need more dialogue on how to promote implementation of Article X of the BTWC. Further discussion could be scheduled for the upcoming intersessional period. We must foster peaceful scientific cooperation, transparency and the transfer of technology for the benefit of development. Such cooperation must conform with the provisions of the BTWC.

It goes without saying that well-functioning primary health systems provide the best defence against diseases. In recent years, we have witnessed the increasing prominence of the health sector in development cooperation. This is very much the case in Norway's development cooperation. Norway provides considerable funding in key areas such as vaccine and immunisation programmes, sexual and reproductive health, fighting HIV/AIDS and support to national health systems.

- We must develop preventive measures, such as codes of conduct for those involved in the life sciences. It is essential that we build on what has been achieved during the current programme of work.
- We must further strengthen response and investigation mechanisms for cases of alleged use of biological weapons. One such mechanism is already in place in the UN system. We must ensure that it performs when needed.
- We need to ensure that States Parties are adequately served by a well-functioning support unit. We greatly appreciate the contribution that the DDA has made so far, but we believe that more resources should be channelled into a support unit. Norway has prepared a working paper on this matter.

I would like to underline how important it is that the BTWC community enhance partnerships with relevant actors like the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the International Organisation for Animal Health, while remaining sensitive to their specific mandates. Moreover, Norway remains convinced of the value of boosting the involvement of the ICRC and civil society actors.

In conclusion, Mr President, the BTWC must be nourished in order to flourish. Let us agree on implementable measures that enable our Convention to fulfil its vital task.