Preparatory Committee
Geneva, 26-27 April and 8-12 August 2016
Item 10 of the agenda
Report of the Preparatory Committee to the Review Conference

Interim report of the Preparatory Committee (26-27 April 2016)

I. Terms of reference and organization

A. Introduction

1. The Final Report of the Seventh 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 (BWC/CONF.VII/7), in paragraph 66 of Part II of the Final Declaration, contained the following decision:

“The Conference decides that the Eighth Review Conference shall be held in Geneva not later than 2016 and should review the operation of the Convention, taking into account, inter alia:

(a) new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention, taking into account the relevant decision of this Conference regarding the review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention;

(b) the progress made by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention;

(c) progress of the implementation of decisions and recommendations agreed upon at the Seventh Review Conference, taking into account, as appropriate, decisions and recommendations reached at previous review conferences.”

2. By resolution 70/74, adopted without a vote on 7 December 2015, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to render the necessary assistance and to provide such services as may be required for the Eighth Review Conference and the preparations for it.

3. The Report of the 2015 Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention (BWC/MSP/2015/6), in paragraph 56 agreed that the Eighth Review Conference would take place from 7 to 25 November 2016, and that its Preparatory Committee would meet for
up to two days on 26 and 27 April 2016 and would resume its work from 8 to 12 August 2016. The Meeting of the States Parties also agreed that the Preparatory Committee meeting in April would consider the agenda items on general exchange of views and the organizational aspects of the Review Conference. It was further agreed that the meeting in August would provide an opportunity for States Parties to consider comprehensively all provisions of the Convention. The Meeting of the States Parties decided that, at the conclusion of the meeting in August, the Chairman would present under his own responsibility, for consideration of delegations ahead of the Review Conference, a summary report without prejudice to perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals presented by delegations or that prejudices the final outcome of the Review Conference.

B. Organization of the Preparatory Committee

4. In accordance with these decisions, the Preparatory Committee convened and held three meetings in Geneva on 26 and 27 April 2016. On behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Mary Soliman, Acting Director of the Geneva Branch, Office for Disarmament Affairs, opened the Preparatory Committee.

5. At its first meeting, the Preparatory Committee elected by acclamation Mr. György Molnár, Ambassador of Hungary as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee.

6. The Preparatory Committee also unanimously elected Mr. Michael Biontino, Ambassador of Germany and Mr. Boudjemâa Delmi, Ambassador of Algeria, as Vice-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee. The Preparatory Committee authorized the Bureau to handle technical and other matters in the period before the Review Conference was convened.

7. The Preparatory Committee decided to take its decisions by consensus.

8. The Preparatory Committee decided to use Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish as official languages.

9. Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief of the Implementation Support Unit, served as Secretary of the Preparatory Committee. Mr. Hermann Lampalzer, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit, served as Deputy Secretary. Ms. Norma Alicia Roulin-Hernandez and Ms. Nadiya Dzyubynska, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva Branch, and Ms. Alexandra Poulies and Ms. Camilla Tett, Implementation Support Unit interns, served in the Secretariat.

C. Participation in the Preparatory Committee

10. 91 States Parties to the Convention participated in the Preparatory Committee as follows: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen and Zimbabwe.
11. The Preparatory Committee, taking note of a written request and in accordance with the draft rule 44, paragraph 2, decided to invite the representative of one State neither party nor signatory to the Convention, Israel, to participate as an observer.

12. The United Nations, including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, attended the Preparatory Committee in accordance with the draft rule 44, paragraph 3.

13. The Preparatory Committee, taking note of a written request and in accordance with the draft rule 44, paragraph 4, decided to invite the European Union to participate as an observer agency and to submit its views in writing.

14. Eight non-governmental organizations and research institutes attended public meetings of the Preparatory Committee in accordance with the draft rule 44, paragraph 5.

15. A list of all participants in the Preparatory Committee is contained in document BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/INF.1.

II. General exchange of views

16. The Preparatory Committee held a general exchange of views in which the following 27 States Parties participated: Armenia, Australia, Belarus, Canada, China, Cuba, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Others Group, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America. One observer agency, the European Union, also made a statement during the general exchange of views.

III. Organization of the Review Conference

17. The Preparatory Committee agreed to recommend to the Eighth Review Conference that Mr. György Molnár, Ambassador of Hungary, preside over the Conference. The Preparatory Committee also reached understanding on a recommendation for final adoption in August with regard to the following distribution of posts of Vice-presidents of the Conference, and Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies, among the various regional groups:

**Vice-presidents:**
- Ten from the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States
- Six from the Western Group
- Four from the Group of Eastern European States

**Committee of the Whole:**
- Chairman: Western Group
- Vice-Chairman: Group of Eastern European States
- Vice-Chairman: Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States

**Drafting Committee:**
- Chairman: Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States
- Vice-Chairman: Western Group
- Vice-Chairman: Group of Eastern European States
Credentials Committee:
Chairman: Group of Eastern European States
Vice-Chairman: Western Group

18. The Preparatory Committee considered the following questions relating to the organization of the Review Conference:

Date and duration

19. The Preparatory Committee endorsed the decision of the 2015 Meeting of the States Parties that the Eighth Review Conference should take place in Geneva from 7 to 25 November 2016.

Provisional agenda

20. The Preparatory Committee reached understanding on a recommendation for final adoption in August to recommend to the Eighth Review Conference the draft provisional agenda as contained in document BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/L.1.

Draft Rules of Procedure


22. The Preparatory Committee reached understanding on a recommendation for final adoption in August to recommend that, with respect to Rule 5, the Review Conference should elect a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen of the Drafting Committee.

23. The Preparatory Committee further reached understanding on a recommendation for final adoption in August to recommend that the General Committee referred to in Rule 8 should be composed of the President of the Review Conference, the 20 Vice-Presidents, the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Committee of the Whole, the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Drafting Committee, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Credentials Committee, to be elected in accordance with Rule 5, the three Regional Group Coordinators, and the Depositories.

24. The Preparatory Committee also reached understanding on a recommendation for final adoption in August to recommend that with respect to meetings referred to in Rule 43 (2), the Committees may decide to hold certain meetings in public.

Background documentation

25. The Preparatory Committee decided to request the Implementation Support Unit to prepare eight background information documents as follows:

(a) A background information document on the history and operation of the confidence-building measures agreed at the Second Review Conference and revised at the Third and Seventh Review Conferences. The document should include data in summary tabular form on the participation of States Parties in the measures since the last Review Conference;

(b) A background information document on the financial implications of proposals for follow-on action after the Eighth Review Conference;
(c) A background information document showing the additional understandings and agreements reached by previous Review Conferences relating to each article of the Convention, extracted from the respective Final Declarations of these conferences;

(d) A background information document showing the common understandings reached by the Meetings of States Parties during the intersessional programme held from 2012 to 2015;

(e) A background information document on the status of universalization of the Convention;

(f) A background information document on compliance by States Parties with all their obligations under the Convention, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties;

(g) A background information document on the implementation of Article VII, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties; and

(h) A background information document on the implementation of Article X, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties, including information submitted pursuant to paragraph 61 of the Final Declaration of the Seventh Review Conference.

26. The Preparatory Committee decided that the background documentation listed in sub-paragraphs 25 (a) to 25 (e) should be circulated not later than four weeks before the opening of its resumed session in August. The background documentation listed in sub-paragraphs 25 (f) to 25 (h) should be circulated not later than four weeks before the opening of the Eighth Review Conference.

Publicity

27. The Preparatory Committee decided to request the Secretariat to issue press releases for the meetings of the Review Conference.

Final document(s)

28. With respect to the question of final document(s) of the Review Conference, the Preparatory Committee decided to include an appropriate item in the provisional agenda of the Conference.

Appointment of a provisional Secretary-General

29. In accordance with draft Rule 10 providing for a Secretary-General of the Review Conference, the Preparatory Committee decided to invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations to nominate an official to act on behalf of the Preparatory Committee as provisional Secretary-General of the Review Conference, the nominee to be confirmed by the Review Conference in accordance with the rules of procedure.

Financial arrangements for the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference

30. The Preparatory Committee noted that the estimated costs for the Preparatory Committee and the Eighth Review Conference, as contained in BWC/MSP/2015/5*, had been approved by the Meeting of the States Parties on 14 December 2015 (see BWC/MSP/2015/6, paragraph 57). The Preparatory Committee encouraged States Parties to pay their assessed contributions without delay.
IV. Documentation


V. Adoption of the Interim Report

32. At its final meeting, on 27 April 2016, the Preparatory Committee adopted its interim report by consensus, as contained in document BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/CRP.1, as orally amended, to be issued as document BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/2.

33. In accordance with the decision of the 2015 Meeting of the States Parties, the Preparatory Committee will resume its work from 8 to 12 August 2016.