Remarks by Ambassador Masood Khan (Pakistan), Chairman of the 2007 Meeting of Experts, at the launch of the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit

Geneva, 20 August 2007

Director-General, Mr. High Representative, excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you all for joining us to celebrate the launch of the Implementation Support Unit. As the other speakers have mentioned, the establishment of the ISU was one of the most significant outcomes of the Sixth Review Conference, and will help set the BWC on its new course. We faced many challenges and difficult negotiations at the Review Conference, but it was striking that the proposal for an ISU was accepted in principle right from the outset. It was clearly an idea which all States Parties, despite their differing circumstances, perspectives and priorities, recognised as a necessary step to strengthen the Convention.

This recognition did not appear by magic. It grew out of the success of the 2003-2005 intersessional process, which did so much to restore the confidence of States Parties in the effectiveness of the Convention as a means to fight the threat of biological weapons. The work the secretariat did to prepare for and support that process demonstrated to States Parties just how useful and effective institutional support for the Convention could be. Although the ISU is an innovative step forward, it is a step taken on the secure ground of demonstrated capability and well-defined expectations.

A small, efficient and highly-focused unit, the ISU will coordinate, concentrate and magnify the efforts of the States Parties. It will harness resources, forge connections, develop networks and identify opportunities. The three staff have between them formidable experience and expertise. Mr. Lennane and Dr. Millett
are well known to many of you, and have been working to support the BWC since the Fifth Review Conference and before. Ms. Huynh brings with her impressive qualifications, experience in the private sector, and - importantly - an abundance of energy.

I have no doubt that the ISU will make an important and innovative contribution to our collective effort to reduce the terrible threat posed by biological weapons. I would like to thank everyone who worked so hard over the past few years, and especially during the Sixth Review Conference, to bring this idea to reality. I am indebted to the many delegations who worked so constructively to overcome their differences and secure a successful outcome to the Conference. The success we celebrate today belongs to all of you.

To conclude, let me echo Mr. Duarte's call for all States Parties to make use of the Implementation Support Unit. It is your resource, designed to help you to do your part in combating the threat of biological weapons. We must continue to work hard - at this Meeting of Experts, and in future. The ISU will help ensure that our efforts are successful.

Thank you for your attention, and for your continuing support. Now I would like to introduce the Head of the ISU, Mr. Richard Lennane, who is going to entertain us with a brief audio-visual presentation. And then I hope you will all stay to enjoy some refreshments.

Thank you.