

**Biological Weapons Convention: Regional Group Meetings**  
**Tuesday 21 June 2016**

**President-Designate's Speaking Notes**

*Western Group: 15:00 to 15:45, Room VII, Palais des Nations*

*Eastern European Group: 16:00 to 16:45, Room VII, Palais des Nations*

*Group of NAM and Other States: 17:00 to 17:45, Room VII, Palais des Nations*

Introduction

I extend my warm appreciation to the Regional Coordinator for convening this meeting and to all Delegations for attending.

This meeting is a follow-up to my letter to States Parties of 25 May 2016 which I hope you have all received and which is also available on the BWC website. I have come to Geneva again for another opportunity to hear your views on preparations for the resumed meeting of the Preparatory Committee that will take place from 8 to 12 August.

Today I would like to go over the preparations for the Preparatory Committee, and then make some more general comments on other issues. As we are approaching the Preparatory Committee, your views on any aspect of preparations, both substantive and procedural, for the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference are more than ever welcome.

April meeting

I would like to thank States Parties for the professional and constructive manner in which they handled the first session of the Preparatory Committee, which allowed us to conduct our work in a collegial spirit. I think this bodes very well for our continued work in August and for the Review Conference itself.

I was pleased that we have already addressed several of the necessary procedural issues for the efficient planning and preparation of the Review Conference in November. I was especially gratified that States Parties responded positively to my request to come to the meeting with concrete proposals for consideration by the Review Conference. In particular, I would like to thank those States Parties which took part in the "general exchange of views" for their willingness to share their ideas at an early stage, and also for their involvement in the interactive segment of the discussion.

Many interesting proposals were tabled in April. Between now and August, I would encourage States Parties to continue to work on existing and new proposals. In some areas where there were a number of proposals there appears to be a degree of convergence of ideas. I hope that interested States Parties will consider the option of working together informally in the coming months in order to identify mutually acceptable approaches in their proposals.

As the preparations for the Review Conference intensify in the months to come, I may consider seeking the assistance of individuals to assist me as friends of the chair on particular topics. At this stage however, it is too early to identify where such assistance may be required.

## August meeting

### *Programme of work*

Our April meeting was not the only opportunity for States Parties to table proposals. I would therefore like to reiterate my encouragement to States Parties to submit ideas and proposals at any time. Proposals submitted in written form can quickly be processed by the Implementation Support Unit and posted on the BWC website for all to see.

The next opportunity for proposals to be presented and discussed collectively will be at the resumed session of the Preparatory Committee in August. Given that this will be a longer session, it is my intention to prepare a programme of work, based on suggestions received from States Parties over the coming weeks.

I hope that we can quickly address the remaining procedural issues at the start of the meeting in August. I would like to recall that we reached general understanding at our April meeting on several such issues, and it appeared that there was no objection to adopting formal decisions on them in accordance with standard practice. Then, as I have mentioned before, we would return to the “general exchange of views”, so that States Parties can present new or revised proposals. Once the “general exchange of views” has been concluded, my intention would be to switch to an informal session in order to hear brief statements from non-governmental organizations, as has been the practice at many previous BWC meetings.

We would then turn to the main work of the August meeting as decided by the Meeting of States Parties. I intend to begin with those topics which do not fit neatly into the structure of the articles of the Convention. For example, questions relating to any future intersessional programme after the Review Conference, or questions relating to the ISU. I would also like to seek your inputs on possible common ground leading to deliverables at the Review Conference.

We will then address item 7 of the agenda of the Preparatory Committee – “comprehensive consideration of all provisions of the Convention”. The articles of the Convention provide a natural structure to this agenda item, so I propose that we should structure our deliberations accordingly using a rolling schedule. Those States Parties who see close linkages between certain articles of the Convention may clarify that during the discussion. Such an approach should provide for a balanced and well-structured discussion during the meeting. I would appreciate hearing your views today in this regard.

### *Summary report*

At the conclusion of our August meeting, the MSP mandated me to produce a summary report without prejudice to the perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals presented by delegations or that prejudices the final outcome of the Review Conference. My intention is that this document will be brief and factual and I hope that it will serve a useful purpose in States Parties’ preparations for the Review Conference.

### *Background documentation*

Our discussions in August will be informed by the background documentation which the Preparatory Committee in April requested the ISU to prepare. As you will recall, the ISU was requested to prepare in time for the August meeting, papers on the following five topics:

- The history and operation of the confidence-building measures;
- The financial implications of proposals for follow-on action after the Eighth Review Conference;
- The additional understandings and agreements reached by previous Review Conferences relating to each article of the Convention;
- The common understandings reached by the Meetings of States Parties during the intersessional programme held from 2012 to 2015; and
- The status of universalization of the Convention.

Advance versions of these five documents, in English only, will be available shortly on the BWC website, along with an advance version of a report on the activities of the ISU from 2012 to 2016. Formal versions of all six documents will be available, in all official languages, at least four weeks prior to our August meeting. I hope that these documents will contribute towards constructive discussions at the meeting.

As you will recall, a further three background documents are to be compiled by the ISU from inputs provided by States Parties and will be ready, in all official languages, in advance of the Review Conference itself. These three documents will address the following topics:

- Compliance by States Parties with all their obligations under the Convention;
- The implementation of Article VII; and
- The implementation of Article X, including information submitted pursuant to paragraph 61 of the Final Declaration of the Seventh Review Conference.

On 23 May, the Chief of the ISU, Daniel Feakes, sent a letter to all States Parties which sets out the process for the submission and production of these three papers. I would like to encourage all States Parties to submit inputs to these papers to the ISU in good time, and certainly not later than the 19 August deadline.

One final issue that relates to the Review Conference itself is that on 1 June in New York I met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations to brief him on preparations for the Review Conference and to invite him to open the meeting. He responded positively, but obviously his schedule is hard to predict at this stage. In order to give due political attention to the Review Conference, I would encourage you to consider recommending that high-level officials from your governments attend the opening of the Review Conference.

### Other issues

#### *Universalization*

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform you of my activities relating to universalization of the Convention. On 6 April, I met with Mr. Apolinário Jorge Correia,

Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations in Geneva, and on 28 April I met with Mr. Deepak Dhital, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations in Geneva. I am happy to report that both countries are close to joining the Convention, and hope to complete the process within the coming months.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Mr. Péter Szijjártó, has recently signed a letter to his counterparts in all 22 States yet to join the Convention. On 2 and 3 June I met with the representatives in New York of Micronesia, Kiribati, Samoa and Tuvalu, four States not party to the Convention that do not have Permanent Missions in Geneva, in order to hand over the ministerial letter and to encourage them to join the Convention. Each of them reacted positively and I would urge those of you with bilateral relations with these countries to reinforce my call. This week, I have appointments to meet with the representatives of Djibouti, Egypt, Haiti, Israel and Tanzania in order to hand over the letter and also encourage them to join the BWC. I am hopeful that by the time of the Review Conference in November, several additional States may have joined the Convention.

### *Confidence-Building Measures*

I am pleased to be able to report that the ISU has already received CBM submissions from 74 States Parties this year, which is the highest number to ever have been submitted. Several additional States Parties are also expected to submit CBMs meaning that the total number of submissions by the end of the year could approach 80. An additional positive fact, is that several of these submissions are from States Parties submitting for the very first time.

### *Sponsorship programme*

I would like to thank Australia and the European Union for their contributions to the sponsorship programme this year, and also Canada and Switzerland for their pledges to contribute the details of which are currently being finalized. The ISU has informed me that it has received forty applications for sponsorship from 25 States Parties. This is a very large number but, with the contributions already made and those pledged, it may be possible to support many of these applications. This would help to achieve a diverse and representative participation in the Review Conference.

### *Financial issues*

As I mentioned in my letter, more scrutiny is now being applied to financial aspects due to new accounting systems being introduced within the United Nations. Yesterday afternoon, I and other office-holders of the disarmament treaties administered here in Geneva, received a briefing from Mr Hans Baritt, the Chief of the Financial Resources Management Service in UNOG about the implications of these changes. Further information will be made available to States Parties in due course. It is important that States Parties pay their assessed contributions on time and in full. Contributions for 2016 should be paid as soon as possible, and outstanding contributions for previous years should also be paid. Outstanding contributions to the BWC up to 2014 currently amount to almost USD 240,000.

### *Related events*

Last week saw the first in a series of informal events in preparation for the Review Conference. From 15-16 June, I attended a regional workshop for States Parties in Eastern

Europe and Central Asia hosted by the government of Kazakhstan in Astana which was made possible by the new European Union Council Decision in support of the Convention. The workshop allowed experts from the region to be briefed on preparations for the Review Conference, to discuss proposals by States Parties and to explore possibilities for intra-regional collaboration. Subsequent EU-supported workshops will take place in New Delhi from 29 to 30 August for Asia, from 12 to 13 September in Addis Ababa hosted by the African Union and in Brasilia for Latin America with the dates still to be confirmed.

Allow me also to draw your attention to next week's Introductory workshop on the Eighth BWC Review Conference, which will take place on Monday 27 June at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. Furthermore, from 20-22 July in Wuxi, Canada, China and the ISU will jointly organize an international workshop entitled "The Eighth BWC Review Conference: Promoting BWC Implementation, Enhancing Global Biosecurity Governance". I am pleased to hear that experts from several States Parties have already registered for the workshop and I would like to thank Canada and China for taking this joint initiative. I encourage States Parties to take advantage of these opportunities for informal discussions on the preparations for the Review Conference.

Finally, I would like to inform you that I plan to next be in Geneva during the week preceding the PrepCom in August at which time I would once again be willing to meet with regional groups, in order to discuss final arrangements for the meeting. I also remain available at any time and can be contacted via the details on the BWC website, or via the Permanent Mission of Hungary in Geneva.