

Wednesday 12th December 2012  
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## The Second Day: cooperation & assistance and science & technology

The 2012 Meeting of States Parties (MSP) of the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC/BTWC) continued on Tuesday with Ambassador Boujemâa Delmi of Algeria in the Chair. The day started with a short continuation of the general debate, before moving on to the first two allocated topics of the Meeting. At the end of day Cuba took the floor for a 'right of reply' intervention after an earlier exchange with the USA on trade issues. A Working Paper, WP.9, from Chile, Colombia, Spain, Italy and Mexico on codes of conduct for scientists was distributed as an official document. A Working Paper by China on international cooperation was made available in an advance version.

### **Plenary statements / General debate**

The general debate continued into Tuesday morning with plenary statements from States Parties in the following order: Republic of Korea, Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria and Peru. This was followed by statements from the European Union (EU) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Much of what was said in this short session followed themes that had been elaborated on Monday. South Africa spoke on the procedures of the inter-sessional process, the subject of their Working Paper. The WHO spoke about implications of the infections caused by a novel coronavirus this year. Owing to the evolving rules of EU common foreign policy implementation, EU member states were inhibited from joining in the general debate as the EU was making a collective statement. Once the general debate was over, EU countries were able to make statements on specific subjects.

### **Cooperation and assistance / Article X**

After the conclusion of the general debate, the MSP moved to the first of its allocated topics: 'Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X'. Statements/interventions were given in the following order: Iran (on behalf of the non-aligned states), France, Netherlands, Belarus, Switzerland, Canada, Mexico, Russia, EU, Italy, United Kingdom, Brazil, Portugal, Cuba, India, Malaysia, China, Australia, United States, Japan, Ghana and Germany.

The non-aligned statement emphasised a belief that potential recipients of assistance were being denied access to materials and technologies in the life sciences as Article X wasn't being implemented effectively. Similar points were repeated in a number of other interventions. On the other hand, many western countries expressed a belief that they were actively implementing these provisions of the Convention and provided illustrations of assistance and cooperation activities. There were suggestions that new dispute-resolution procedures should be adopted to deal with Article X issues while others felt that existing arrangements under Article V were adequate. The debate was not simply a north-south divergence of views. India, as both a recipient of assistance as well as a donor, emphasised that there needed to be a balance between Article III (national implementation) and Article X. A number of statements noted that cooperation was more of a two-way process than

assistance. It was highlighted that no single country in the world can deal with all potential public health threats on its own. Examples of south-south cooperation were given. There was discussion on the database established after the Seventh Review Conference in 2011 to enable offers and requests for assistance and cooperation to be consolidated. This included whether more could be done to make this easier to use and to encourage more States Parties to enter information into it.

### **Science & technology developments**

After lunch, the MSP moved on to its second allocated topic, 'Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention'. Statements/interventions were given in the following order: Iran (on behalf of the non-aligned states), Ukraine, Cuba, Switzerland, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain, Poland, Spain, Mexico, Australia, Japan, India, Sweden, Russia, United States, Canada and Iran (national). Vice-chair Cezary Lusinski of Poland took the chair for this session of the Meeting.

Many issues were raised in this discussion. Some interventions included specifics about particular developments while others looked at implications of developments and how regulatory arrangements should handle dual-use issues. There were questions raised about how the scientific advice might best be handled. Iran, on behalf of the non-aligned, suggested that as there were no definitions of biosafety or biosecurity in the BWC these should be defined on a national basis. The Netherlands referred to its experiences earlier in the year with the H5N1 flu research issues. India highlighted the need to promote responsible conduct amongst the scientific community. There was much discussion about codes of conduct. There were a number of references to implications of the convergence between biology and chemistry. Switzerland referred to their proposal in the Chemical Weapons Convention for there to be discussion on the topic of incapacitating agents. This elicited supportive comments from the UK and Australia.

### **Side events**

Three side events were held during Tuesday; one before the start of formal proceedings and two during the lunch break. The breakfast event was convened by Canada and the University of Bradford on 'Awareness of the Dual-Use Challenges into Biosafety and Biosecurity Training and Education for Life Scientists'. Presentations were given by Simon Whitby (Bradford), Renée Carrière (Canada) and Shuji Amano (University of Nagasaki). The event was chaired by Ambassador Elissa Golberg (Canada). One lunchtime event was convened by the Biosecurity Working Group of the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues to provide updates on recent activities under the title 'IAP: Global Network of Science Academies'. Presentations were given by Sergio Pastrana (Academy of Sciences of Cuba), Elinor Buxton (Royal Society, UK), Lei Zhang (Chinese Academy of Sciences), Sue Meek (Australian Academy of Sciences), Sergey Zavriev (Russian Academy of Sciences) and Andrej Górski (Polish Academy of Sciences). The event was chaired by Gabriel Ogunmola (Nigerian Academy of Science). The other was convened by the EU with the ISU and was the launch of the new EU Action in support of the BWC. Introductions were provided by Ambassador Mariangela Zappia (EU) and Jarmo Sareva (UN Office for Disarmament Affairs [UNODA]). Presentations were given by Richard Lennane (ISU), Karin Hjalmarsson (UNODA), Jean Pascal Zanders (EU Institute for Security Studies), Jesus (Gary) Domingo (Philippines) and Enrique Valencia Muñoz (Colombia). The event was chaired by Andras Kos (EU).

*This is the third report from the Meeting of States Parties for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention which is being held from 10 to 14 December 2012 in Geneva. The reports are prepared by Richard Guthrie on behalf of the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP). Copies of these reports, starting from 2006, are available via the BWPP website at <<http://www.bwpp.org>>.*

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