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**Meeting 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**

5 December 2012

English only

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**2012 Meeting**

Geneva, 10–14 December 2012

Item 12 of the provisional agenda

**Arrangements for the Meeting of Experts  
and Meeting of States Parties in 2013**

**The intersessional process: comments and proposals**

**Submitted by South Africa**

**I. Introduction**

1. The Seventh Review Conference decided on intersessional structures of annual Meetings of States Parties (MSP) preceded by annual Meetings of Experts (MXP), with the MXP submitting reports to the annual MSP. The purpose of this programme is “to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action” on the issues identified by the Seventh Review Conference for inclusion in the intersessional programme.

**II. Comments on the Meeting of Experts**

2. It is South Africa’s view that the MXP should be utilised for in-depth technical discussions of the relevant aspects under the different agenda points in order to provide inputs for the MSP to come to conclusions to promote common understanding and effective action on these issues. While the Chair of 2012 BWC meetings executed his tasks in an exemplary manner, the technical discussions during the formal MXP in July 2012 regrettably did not provide sufficient material for an MXP report that would effectively promote common understanding and effective action on the issues raised. Some of the side-events held on the margins of the MXP generated more in-depth technical discussions; however, these were not part of the formal MXP.

3. In spite of initial concerns that there would be too little time to do all the work, not all the available time was utilised during the July 2012 MXP and there are indications that that tendency will continue unless there is a change in the general approach to the MXP.

**A. Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening  
cooperation and assistance under Article X**

4. Discussions under this standing agenda item primarily involved the reiteration of national positions, while the functioning of the database that was established by the Seventh

Review Conference did not attract substantive debate and interaction. There was also no concrete effort made to identify aspects to improve international cooperation and assistance that could be considered in order to reach common understandings.

## **B. Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention**

5. Some excellent presentations were given by experts in which the very complicated scientific issues were explained in simple terms. However, there was no substantive engagement on these presentations and therefore, opportunities to come to useful common understandings were lost. A number of very useful discussions took place during lunch time side events, but they were not attended by all delegations or part of the formal MXP.

## **C. Strengthening national implementation, confidence building measures and promotion of universalisation**

6. Although the programme provided for a variety of aspects, no effort was made to discuss these issues from a technical point of view.

## **III. Proposals**

7. Although generalised discussions and statements by delegations will always be useful, it is necessary to have more focussed technical discussions on specific aspects to ensure that common understanding and effective action is achieved.

8. It is proposed that the MSP requests the Chairperson of the next year to specifically consider the following in the development of the programme for the MXP and that delegations prepare accordingly:

### **A. Cooperation and assistance**

9. Evaluation of the Cooperation database as follows:

(a) Report on the functioning of the database to be submitted by the ISU indicating how many States Parties have posted requests and/or pledges for cooperation and any results that have been achieved from the utilisation of the database. The subsequent discussion could focus on the level of participation, the reasons for high or low levels of participation and possible solutions to improve the database.

(b) The same approach can be followed for the other elements under this agenda point.

### **B. Science and technology**

10. Presentations by technical experts to clarify the relevant technology issues could be followed by a focussed discussion on each aspect raised and its relevance for the Convention, as well as actions that may be necessary. Informal sessions of the MXP to accommodate technical discussions on the issues covered during the relevant side-events could also be considered.

11. The approach of identifying potential actions and pros and cons of such actions could also be used for the other agenda items.

12. No change in relation to the current practice in the compilation of the report of the MXP is suggested, however, the proposed approach and focussed technical discussions could guide the Chairperson in this endeavour.

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