

**SIXTH 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**

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**Review of the operation of the Convention
as provided for in its Article XII**

NEW INTER-SESSIONAL PROCESS

Submitted by South Africa

Introduction

1. On 14 November 2002, the Fifth Review Conference decided the following by consensus:

- (i) To hold three annual meetings of the States Parties of one week duration each year commencing in 2003 until the Sixth Review Conference, to be held not later than the end of 2006, to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on:
 - (a) the adoption of necessary national measures to implement the prohibitions set forth in the Convention, including the enactment of penal legislation;
 - (b) national mechanisms to establish and maintain the security and oversight of pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins;
 - (c) enhancing international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease;
 - (d) strengthening and broadening national and international institutional efforts and existing mechanisms for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases affecting humans, animals, and plants;
 - (e) the content, promulgation, and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

- (ii) Each meeting of the States Parties will be prepared by a two-week meeting of experts.
- (iii) The meetings of experts will prepare factual reports describing their work.
- (iv) The Sixth Review Conference will consider the work of these meetings and decide on any further action.

2. There is agreement among States Parties that this process was useful in particular to keep momentum in the efforts to strengthen the Convention in the present circumstances. However, the process was structured in such a way that the substantial results of the process will only be determined at the Sixth Review Conference.

New process

- 3. The strengthening of the Convention should remain an objective of all States Parties and therefore also this Conference. In this regard it will be useful to take a step in the direction of further strengthening the Convention.
- 4. To achieve this it will be necessary that any inter-sessional process that will follow this Conference should be able to deliver more in terms of substantial measures than the last process.

Proposal for the next inter-sessional process

- 5. A more substantial process that will consist of expert meetings on one or more subjects (one week per subject) each year for the first three years is proposed.
- 6. These meetings will report to a meeting of States Parties, which will take place in the fourth year and will be two weeks in duration. The meetings of experts may make proposals to the meeting of States Parties.
- 7. The meeting of States Parties will consider the reports and any proposals made by the meetings of experts and then make proposals to the Seventh Review Conference for consideration.
- 8. The following subjects for discussion can be considered:
 - (i) Identification of national and international measures and actions to improve Biosafety and Biosecurity;
 - (ii) International cooperation to assess and improve the capacity of international and national primary health care systems to manage disease;
 - (iii) To review the purposes, utility, formats, universalisation, and management of CBMs. This meeting could last two weeks and should make proposals to the meeting of States Parties;

- (iv) Discussion and examination of the means for improving international cooperation in the use of biotechnology for peaceful purposes.

9. The subjects discussed during the period between the Fifth and Sixth Review Conferences can be considered in terms of implementation and new developments during the meeting of States Parties.
