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WORKING PAPER BY BULGARIA

Strengthening the BWC - The Bulgarian View

Bulgaria accepts the positive outcome of the VEREX process. It is our view that some of the proposed verification measures, implemented separately and in combination, can afford the detection of eventual breaches of the Convention.

At the same time their application is limited, especially when dual-use activities should be differentiated. Some of the proposed measures provoke questions related to the protection of confidential information, constitutional rights, national security. Others raise doubts about their effectiveness and overhead expenses. We insist on further evaluation of the possibilities for application of the measures, relating to remote sensing, the capabilities of which to detect biological weapons in its essential stage of laboratory research, are extremely limited and almost impossible, not speaking about their high costs.

Despite this, our country favours the creation of a legally binding regime based on mandatory declarations on relevant facilities of all States Parties to the Convention. It is necessary, however, to determine precisely the sites, the agents and the activities to be declared. We support also the inclusion of on-site inspections into the future verification Protocol. This purpose should be achieved by establishing an ad hoc working group, open to all States Parties, mandated by our Conference. The problems mentioned above should find an appropriate consideration and solution.

Bulgaria is ready to participate constructively in drawing up appropriate verification rules, to accept any inspections of all its activities concerned. We could take part in the future verification regime providing a relevant expertise. Considering the problem of the illustrative lists of potential BW agents, we think that a special attention should be paid to the pests on plants and animals. One cannot exclude the possibility of their use even in periods of peace for economic or other reasons. In such cases, and especially when plant diseases and epizootics take place in one or another country, the future verification regime should have the tools for identification the sources of infection.

Bulgaria believes that the potential verification measures would have the relevant impact on scientific research, cooperation, industrial development and other permitted activities, in accordance with art. 10 of BWC. These goals should be achieved on the basis of the common objective of the non-proliferation of biological weapons.