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WORKING PAPER BY BRAZIL

STRENGTHENING THE BWC: THE NEXT STEPS

1. The complex nature of the issues pertaining to the strengthening of the BWC makes it necessary to adopt a gradual approach to dealing with proposals for the implementation of a regime for verification of compliance. Although the technical aspects of verifying the BWC have to a considerable extent been satisfactorily dealt with by VEREX, there is still considerable work to be done, both at the technical and political levels.

2. It is now necessary to integrate a package of verification measures into a coherent system, which should include a subset of the verification measures examined by VEREX and a definition of the features of the mechanism for their implementation. However, it will be possible to reach agreement on such a system only if there is previous agreement on the political goals of the whole process. The purpose of strengthening the BWC is to help achieve the mutually reinforcing objectives of excluding "completely the possibility of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins being used as weapons" (Preambular 9) and facilitating "the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes" (Article X).

3. While the first objective is the primary aim of the Convention, progress towards the second would be important for approaching the first.

4. It seems that the task of the Special Conference should be to reiterate clearly and unequivocally the purpose of the process of strengthening the Convention and, in doing so, to set up the foundations for the work of an Ad Hoc Group on Compliance which would make a concrete proposal to that end, ideally in time for the Review Conference of 1996. It is the view of Brazil that the terms of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group on Compliance should include:

- the definition of a system for verification and promotion of compliance with the BWC, based upon, inter alia, a combination of measures identified and examined by VEREX, with a view to determine whether States-Parties are complying with their obligations under the Convention; and

- the definition of the responsibilities of the machinery which would be in charge of managing the verification system and of "contributing individually or together" with other international organizations or States "to the further development and application of scientific discoveries in the field of bacteriology (biology) for

prevention of disease, or for other peaceful purposes" (Article X), thus fostering economic and social development.

5. Careful consideration of the issue demonstrates clearly that, far from hindering each other, the two tracks of the work of the organization which will be in charge of the BWC (verification and technological development) are mutually reinforcing. The provision of technical assistance and the establishment of a cooperative relationship with national authorities is the only practical, cost-effective way of amassing information on the hundreds, or even thousands, of biological facilities potentially relevant to the Convention. Conversely, cooperation with the verification regime could help national authorities, inter alia, in their efforts to upgrade biological safety standards and practices and to participate in the fullest possible technological interchange for peaceful purposes.

6. The mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, in short, should include a clear reference to the goals of the process of strengthening the BWC (disarmament and development), to the basis for its work on verification of compliance (the VEREX report) and to the purposes of the organization or center in charge of implementation (verification and technical assistance).