

Second Meeting
Geneva, 6-10 December 2004
Items 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda

**SYNTHESIS OF CONSIDERATIONS, LESSONS, PERSPECTIVES,
RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS DRAWN
FROM THE PRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS, WORKING PAPERS
AND INTERVENTIONS MADE BY DELEGATIONS ON THE TOPICS
UNDER DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING OF EXPERTS**

CHAIRMAN'S PAPER

Prepared by the Chairman

Agenda Item 5

1. General principles and objectives

Recognising that improved national and international surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious disease will support the object and purpose of the Convention, States Parties should strengthen existing capabilities in these areas, including by:

- strengthening existing international networks, and in particular supporting the efforts of the WHO, FAO and OIE;
- building up their own national capabilities, to help ensure early detection of and rapid response to outbreaks of disease throughout their national territory;
- using existing standards, guidelines and recommendations wherever possible.

2. International cooperation and support

Recognising that disease outbreaks do not respect international boundaries, and that outbreaks can best be quickly contained and suppressed through international cooperation and support, States Parties should:

- help other States Parties to improve their disease surveillance and response capabilities, including by providing, if in a position to do so, information, training, technical expertise or financial support;

- support and encourage the WHO, FAO, OIE and other relevant international organisations in their efforts to assist States Parties to strengthen their national disease surveillance and response capabilities;
- establish or expand regional cooperation and surveillance efforts, especially for animal diseases;
- support and encourage cooperation between the public and private sectors, and the involvement of medical institutions and NGOs, in disease surveillance and response.

3. Organisation, structure and planning

Recognising that the WHO, FAO and OIE are the international organisations primarily responsible for global disease surveillance and response, and that national organisations, structures and planning should be coordinated with and complement those organisations, States Parties should:

- support and encourage the WHO, FAO and OIE to establish a standing capacity for epidemiological investigation of disease outbreaks and an immediate response capacity, including establishing stocks of drugs, vaccines and diagnostic kits in regional centres;
- develop their own standing capacity for disease surveillance and response by establishing an appropriate organisational structure with sufficient funding, based on a coordinated national strategy and involving all the relevant authorities, institutions, laboratories and partners;
- better integrate the respective surveillance programs for human, animal and plant diseases, and strengthen cooperation among the respective authorities;
- consider using symptom-based and syndromic surveillance and reporting where possible;
- increase involvement of clinicians and laboratory personnel in surveillance, and encourage community and industry participation in surveillance and response;
- develop and rehearse contingency plans, and encourage industry to do the same.

4. Communication and information management

Recognising that transparency, open communication, rapid notification and timely access to information are the keys to controlling infectious disease while maintaining trust and international trade and investment, States Parties should:

- share their experiences with disease surveillance and relevant research, and make the mechanics of their surveillance systems known to their neighbours and trading partners;
- maintain, strengthen and improve their notification systems for disease outbreaks, using electronic systems where possible, and ensuring that regional and rural areas are covered;
- improve communication with the WHO, OIE and FAO, and encourage these organisations to facilitate the exchange of information on infectious disease surveillance among States Parties;

- improve the flow of surveillance information between and within levels of national and local systems, for example by establishing a laboratory network, providing incentives rather than penalties for reporting, standardising forms and software, and providing appropriate training;
- raise public awareness of disease surveillance, and inform farmers and communities of the role they can play in early notification of disease outbreaks.

5. Standards and legal framework

Recognising the importance of coordinating and harmonising efforts to combat infectious disease, and of making the best use of limited resources, States Parties should:

- take into account the advice of the WHO, FAO and OIE in the case of outbreaks of infectious disease;
- use the international standards developed by the WHO, FAO and OIE and other relevant organisations as a basis for their own national standards and legislation;
- establish an appropriate legal framework to support the national disease surveillance and response effort and ensure that standards are enforced;
- standardise operational plans, protocols and test methodologies nationally and, where appropriate, internationally.

6. Laboratories, techniques and training

Recognising that the vigilance of health care providers and the effectiveness of laboratories are important factors in the surveillance and control of infectious disease, States Parties should:

- ensure that physicians, veterinarians, auxiliary personnel and others who are in the best position to observe and report diseases receive regular and continuous training;
- maintain and enhance a network of designated laboratories in accordance with international standards, ensuring that the laboratories are in a constant state of readiness, that procedures are tested, and that personnel are fully trained;

7. Research and development

Recognising that scientific and technological developments have the potential to significantly improve disease surveillance and response, States Parties should:

- support the WHO, FAO and OIE programmes for the continued development of, and research into, speedy, effective and reliable disease surveillance and response activities;
- continue, and where possible devote additional resources to, their own national research into additional early detection capabilities, faster and more specific analytical methods, biotechnological tools, and areas such as real-time symptom surveillance;
- share the results of such research and development as freely as possible with other States Parties.

Agenda Item 6

1. General principles and objectives

Recognising that an effective international capability for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease is essential for promoting international peace and security, States Parties should enhance the existing capability, including by:

- using and continuing to develop the respective procedures and mechanisms under Articles V, VI and VII of the Convention;
- focusing efforts on the early detection, prevention and control of all disease outbreaks, regardless of origin;
- developing their national capacities for response, investigation and mitigation, in cooperation with the relevant international and regional organisations;
- considering whether new international mechanisms may be needed in future.

2. International cooperation and support

Recognising that international cooperation is indispensable for effectively responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease, States Parties should:

- help other States Parties to improve their relevant national capabilities, including by providing, if in a position to do so, information, training, technical expertise, tangible resources or financial support;
- ensure that they are prepared to promptly consider requests for emergency assistance from other States Parties;
- support and encourage the WHO, FAO, OIE and other relevant international organisations in their efforts to enhance States' Parties technical and organisational national preparedness;
- support and encourage the WHO, FAO and OIE to further develop and strengthen epidemiological networks, global alert systems, and response capabilities.

3. Organisation, structure and planning

Recognising that international capabilities depend to a large extent on States Parties' national preparedness and arrangements for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease, States Parties should:

- develop or improve a simple, properly disseminated and regularly tested and revised emergency response plan, covering command and control and clearly defining the responsibilities of all concerned actors;
- develop procedures for threat assessment, risk analysis and management, involving both public health and security and law enforcement authorities;

- ensure that sufficient resources for effective response, such as drug and vaccine stocks, diagnostic kits and detection equipment, are available and can be distributed quickly;
- strengthen public health infrastructure;
- ensure national capacity takes full advantage of available international and regional , resources and expertise.

4. Communication and information management

Recognising that clear communication and effective management of information are crucial for early detection, rapid response, and effective investigation and mitigation, as well as for maintaining public trust and cooperation and international confidence, States Parties should:

- develop communication systems, networks and strategies to ensure effective dissemination of information among States Parties, international organisations, domestic agencies, the media and the public in the case of an outbreak or incident;
- ensure that such systems and networks are integrated into their emergency response plans, are interoperable as far possible, and are tested;
- raise public awareness of the practicalities of responding to, investigating and mitigating incidents;
- in the case of an outbreak or incident, provide as much information as possible to the public, and provide all necessary information and evidence to any international investigation or assistance operation.

5. Standards and legal framework

Recognising the importance of coordinating and harmonising efforts to respond to, investigate and mitigate the effects of alleged use or suspicious outbreaks, and of using the best available methods, States Parties should:

- harmonise national, regional and international response plans in cooperation with the relevant international organisations, which have an important responsibility for coordination;
- ensure investigations reflect the best scientific protocols, incorporate the best investigative methods, include the best law enforcement practices and exhibit objectivity and accuracy;
- establish an appropriate legal framework to support national responses, investigations and efforts to mitigate incidents and to ensure that standards are enforced.

6. Laboratories, techniques, technology and training

Recognising the importance of laboratories and related technology in responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of alleged use or suspicious outbreaks, States Parties should:

- strengthen international and national cooperation and linkages between relevant laboratories to improve information management, communication and reliability;

- develop standards for laboratories involved in responding to, investigating or mitigating incidents, including accreditation, training, forensic considerations and sample transport;
- ensure best practices are used for microbiology, sampling, analysis, chains of custody, labelling, handling and transport, etc, and are fully integrated into national emergency response plans;
- support efforts to research and develop relevant new technologies, including for the analysis of complex biological samples and the detection of biological and toxin warfare agents;
- conduct international training exercises for laboratory and other relevant personnel.

7. United Nations Secretary-General's investigation mechanism

Recognising that the Secretary-General's investigation mechanism, set out in A/44/561 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution A/Res/45/57, represents the only existing international institutional mechanism for investigating cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons, States Parties authorise the Chairman to write on their behalf to the Secretary-General to request that he review and consider updating the investigation mechanism, taking into consideration, *inter alia*, the following suggestions:

- re-evaluation and updating of the lists of experts;
- confidentiality agreements for all personnel which prohibit communicating any matter related to an investigation with any person or institution not involved in the investigation unless authorised to do so by the Secretary-General.
- consideration of the logistical and financial requirements for an investigation;
- revision of the information to be provided in support of a request for an investigation;
- re-evaluation of the guidelines and procedures relating to the victims of an alleged attack;
- re-evaluation of the guidelines and procedures for sampling and analysis;
- use of expert consultants whose composition should be specified to ensure a representative and geographic equality;
- a requirement for the final report to be transmitted to the Secretary-General, made available to the receiving state and any other involved state, and submitted to the Security Council.

The Chairman is requested to invite the Secretary-General to report to the Sixth Review Conference on his review, any updates which he recommends, and any action taken or required by the General Assembly. In addition, States Parties should:

- identify the types of expertise that would be required for a new round of nominations of experts, if required;
 - update their contributions for the list of qualified experts and list of laboratories;
 - designate relevant specialised training courses available to qualified experts.
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