
Geneva, 20 November-8 December 2006

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 20 November 2006, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. TANAKA
(Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs)

President: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

CONTENTS

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR
DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

REMARKS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE SIXTH
REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

* In accordance with rule 42 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, no summary records were prepared for meetings, or parts of meetings, devoted to consideration of agenda item 10 (a) - General debate.

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this Conference will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the Conference.

GE.06-65401 (E) 221106 231106

CONTENTS (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

ELECTION OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE CONFERENCE AND CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONFERENCE

(a) APPOINTMENT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

CONFIRMATION OF THE NOMINATION OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

PROGRAMME OF WORK

REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE CONVENTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN ITS ARTICLE XII

(a) GENERAL DEBATE

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the 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. The Convention embodied the international community's determination to exclude forever the possibility of disease being used as a weapon and was an important element in the collective struggle against weapons of mass destruction. The challenge facing the Sixth Review Conference was to: review all aspects of the operation of the Convention and decide on action to maintain and strengthen its effectiveness.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said that at its meeting in April 2006, the Preparatory Committee had agreed to recommend to the Sixth Review Conference that Mr. Masood Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan, should preside over the Conference.

3. Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan) was elected President by acclamation.

4. The PRESIDENT thanked States parties for the honour bestowed on him and extended a warm welcome to the Secretary-General. Despite the effectiveness of the Convention as a barrier against the use of disease as a weapon, the possible acquisition and use of biological weapons by terrorists was a new and potent threat. Extraordinary breakthroughs in the biosciences held out the promise of better medicines, crops, and a healthier environment, but at the same time the legitimate development of new vaccines and treatments had a more sinister potential for abuse.

5. The Conference would provide a vital opportunity to meet those challenges, without however smothering scientific inquiry or restricting the growth of the bio-technology industry. Decisions were required on strategy and activities beyond 2006, and a concise and broadly accessible outcome document recording the Conference's understandings and commitments should be produced. Efforts to universalize the treaty should be stepped up with a view to securing universal adherence by 2011. States parties would also need to consider the issues of bioterrorism; national implementation; confidence-building measures; biosafety and biosecurity; scientific and technological cooperation and exchange; compliance and verification; coordination with other organizations; and institutional support arrangements. Most importantly, a full calendar of work would have to be developed for the period up to the following Conference, to ensure continuity.

6. The fight against biological weapons must be a shared effort, seeking coherence among national mechanisms, confidence-building among States parties and synergy between international organizations, scientists, civil society and the private sector. In that respect, the Conference represented an opportunity to overcome the paralysis that had stymied disarmament efforts in recent years.

REMARKS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE SIXTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

7. The SECRETARY-GENERAL said that, five years previously, the Fifth Review Conference had faced the dire prospect of stalemate and deadlock. In becoming States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, countries had demonstrated their determination to do their part in preventing disease from being used as a weapon. But when it had come to strengthening the Convention through a protocol, years of negotiations had failed to achieve a consensus. Deep and bitter divisions had threatened to bring the collective efforts against biological weapons to a permanent halt.

8. Yet because of States parties' commitment and resourcefulness, history had taken a different path. The Conference had decided that the threat of biological weapons was too important to be abandoned to political paralysis. And a way had been found, if not to resolve differences, then to work around them. Over the past four years, an innovative programme of work had been created, developed and carried out, drawing on the knowledge and experience of legal, scientific, security, public-health and law enforcement experts from around the world. The programme had made a modest but practical contribution to the implementation of the Convention and had reduced the risk of biological weapons being developed, acquired or used. In particular, national implementation of the Convention had been improved, and the security of dangerous pathogens had been tightened. National and international capacities for disease surveillance were being strengthened. The links between natural and deliberate outbreaks of disease, and responses to them, were being improved. And the international scientific community had been invited to play a role through education and efforts to promote a culture of awareness upon which best practices and codes of conduct could be built.

9. All States parties could take credit for that achievement. All had made compromises; many had deferred their ambitions; and some had had reservations. But all had demonstrated real commitment, and had turned an interim measure into a remarkable success. That was how multilateralism should be: flexible, responsive, creative and dynamic; and above all, focused on overcoming obstacles and delivering results. Now was the time to build on those results and take further steps to ensure that the Convention would continue to serve as an effective barrier against biological weapons.

10. In the five years since the last Review Conference, global circumstances had changed and risks had evolved. Today there was a strong focus on preventing terrorism, as well as renewed concern about naturally occurring diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and avian flu. Those developments had transformed the environment in which the Convention operated, and had altered ideas about its role and potential. Over the same period, advances in biological science and technology had continued to accelerate, promising enormous benefits for human development, but also posing potential risks. Those changes meant that the Convention could no longer be viewed in isolation, as simply a treaty prohibiting States from obtaining biological weapons. Rather, it must be looked at as part of an interlinked array of tools, designed to deal with an interlinked array of problems. Certainly, it was necessary to deal with disarmament and non-proliferation in the traditional sense. But terrorism and crime at the non-State and individual levels must also be addressed, with responses encompassing public health, disaster relief and efforts to ensure that the peaceful uses of biological science and technology could safely reach their potential.

11. And those strands needed to be stitched together into a coherent strategy. In recent months - and again two days previously in Switzerland - he had raised the idea of a forum that would bring together the various stakeholders - industry, science, public health, governments, and the public writ large - in an effort to ensure that biotechnology's advances continued to be used for the benefit of humanity while the risks were managed. The current Review Conference could make a major contribution to that effort. He urged it to pool the capacities of all those attending. Treaties were an essential part of the multilateral system, and could be strengthened by building bridges to different fields. Such an approach would also ensure that actions were complementary and mutually reinforcing. Furthermore, building public health capacities could strengthen safeguards against bioterrorism. And being better prepared to deal with terrorism could mean better public-health systems overall. Similarly, the availability of training and technology was crucial to improving laboratory safety and security, and making laboratories safe and secure encouraged cooperation and created opportunities for development. There were many other links and possibilities. He encouraged States parties to explore them, and not to return to the confrontational approaches of the past.

12. The efforts of the past four years had put the Conference in a good position to make further progress. Differences would remain. But once again he urged delegations to find creative and resourceful ways around them. Much more united States parties than divided them. The horror of biological weapons was shared by all. As the Convention stated, their use would be "repugnant to the conscience of mankind". He urged States parties to seize the opportunity presented by the Conference, assuring them of the United Nations continued support.

13. The PRESIDENT thanked the Secretary-General on behalf of all the States parties to the Convention for his most valuable comments and encouragement, and for his deep personal commitment to disarmament throughout his tenure. Since the present Conference would be the last disarmament conference held during the Secretary-General's term, he pledged that it would do its utmost to fulfil its responsibility towards the international community in order to make a genuine contribution to global security, as a legacy to his vision and determination.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (BWC/CONF.VI/1)

14. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the provisional agenda recommended by the Preparatory Committee (BWC/CONF.VI/1), recalling that the main substantive issues on the agenda were items 10 to 12, which would constitute the bulk of the work of the Conference.

15. The agenda was adopted.

SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE (BWC/CONF.VI/PC/2)

16. The PRESIDENT, speaking as former Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, introduced the Committee's final report (BWC/CONF.VI/PC/2). He was pleased to report that all the Committee's decisions and recommendations had been adopted by consensus, thanks to the spirit of cooperation and goodwill demonstrated by the participants. He expressed his

appreciation to all the delegations that had participated in the Committee, in particular the Vice-Chairmen and the coordinators of the regional groups, as well as to the secretariat for its help in preparing various background information documents that had enabled States parties to prepare for the Conference.

ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE (BWC/CONF.VI/PC/2 (Annex II))

17. The PRESIDENT invited the Conference to consider the draft rules of procedure recommended by the Preparatory Committee (BWC/CONF.VI/PC/2, annex II) and drew its attention to paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Committee's report, recommending certain adjustments to rules 5 and 8, namely to elect two (rather than one) Vice-Chairmen for the Drafting Committee and to enlarge the membership of the General Committee to include the President, the 20 Vice-Presidents, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the three committees, the three regional coordinators, and the three depositaries. With regard to the participation of non-governmental organizations, he recalled that the Preparatory Committee had agreed to retain rule 44, paragraph 5, and to continue the arrangements adopted at the Fourth and Fifth Review Conferences, enabling non-governmental organizations to make presentations to the Conference at an appropriate time.

18. The rules of procedure, as amended, were adopted.

REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

19. The PRESIDENT said that one State not party to the Convention, namely Israel, had requested Observer status, in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure. If there was no objection, he took it that the Conference agreed to the request.

20. It was so decided.

21. The PRESIDENT added that the following specialized agencies and international organizations had also requested Observer status, in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 4, of the rules of procedure: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the League of Arab States, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). He took it that the Committee agreed to those requests.

22. It was so decided.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE CONFERENCE AND CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

23. The PRESIDENT recalled that, under rule 5 of the rules of procedure and paragraphs 15 and 20 of the report of the Preparatory Committee, the Conference had to elect 20 Vice-Presidents, comprising 10 members of the group of non-aligned and other States, 6 members of the Western group and 4 members of the group of Eastern European States.

24. Following consultations in the various regional groups, the following candidates had been proposed:

Western group: Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan and Turkey;

Group of Eastern European States: Belarus, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine;

Group of non-aligned and other States: Chile, China, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Peru, with three more nominations awaited.

25. The States parties named were elected Vice-Presidents by acclamation.

26. The PRESIDENT said that the remaining Vice-Presidents would be elected when the group of non-aligned and other States was in a position to put forward additional nominations. Following consultations, Mr. Doru Costea (Romania) had been nominated Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and Mr. Paul Meyer (Canada) and a candidate from the group of non-aligned and other States, whose nomination was still awaited, Vice-Chairmen. Mr. Knut Langeland (Norway) had been nominated Chairman of the Drafting Committee, and Mr. Vladimir Bundin (Russian Federation) and a candidate from the group of non-aligned and other States, whose nomination was still awaited, Vice-Chairmen. Mr. Philip Owade (Kenya) had been nominated Chairman of the Credentials Committee and Mr. Jürg Streuli (Switzerland) Vice-Chairman.

27. Mr. Costea (Romania) was elected Chairman and Mr. Meyer (Canada) Vice-Chairman of the Committee of the Whole by acclamation.

28. Mr. Langeland (Norway) was elected Chairman and Mr. Bundin (Russian Federation) Vice-Chairman of the Drafting Committee by acclamation.

29. Mr. Owade (Kenya) was elected Chairman and Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) Vice-Chairman of the Credentials Committee by acclamation.

30. The PRESIDENT said that the remaining Vice-Presidents would be elected when the group of non-aligned and other States was in a position to put forward additional nominations.

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONFERENCE

(a) APPOINTMENT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

31. The PRESIDENT said that, under rule 3 of the rules of procedure, the Conference had also to appoint five further members of the Credentials Committee. Following consultations with delegations, he proposed the appointment of representatives of Bulgaria and Mongolia. Representatives from three other States parties had still to be nominated.

32. It was so decided.

33. The PRESIDENT reminded the delegations which had not yet done so that they should present their credentials.

CONFIRMATION OF THE NOMINATION OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

34. The PRESIDENT informed the Conference that, pursuant to paragraph 26 of the report of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had provisionally nominated Mr. Tim Caughley, Director of the Geneva Branch of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, as Secretary-General of the Conference. If there were no objections, he took it that the Conference wished to confirm Mr. Caughley as Secretary-General of the Conference.

35. It was so decided.

PROGRAMME OF WORK (BWC/CONF.VI/2)

36. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the indicative programme of work as contained in document BWC/CONF.VI/2. He emphasized that the programme was only indicative, thus requiring flexibility on the part of delegations, who would be consulted as necessary on any alterations to the schedule. He proposed that the meeting on Tuesday afternoon, 21 November 2001, should end at 4.30 p.m. to enable a number of non-governmental organizations to make statements. If there was no objection, he took it that the indicative programme of work was adopted.

37. It was so decided.

REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE CONVENTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN ITS ARTICLE XII

(a) GENERAL DEBATE

38. Mr. LYRA (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the candidate countries (Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) and, in addition, Moldova and Ukraine; Mr. FERNÁNDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention; Mr. VALLE FONROUGE (Argentina), also speaking on behalf of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay; Mr. MEYER (Canada), speaking on behalf of the JACKSONNZ Group (Japan, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand); Mr. ROOD (United States of America); Mr. GRÖNING (Germany); Mr. WIRENGJURIT (Indonesia); Mr. STREULI (Switzerland); Mr. MINE (Japan); Mr. YAAKOB (Malaysia); Ms. MILLAR (Australia); Mr. DUNCAN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); Mr. ANTONOV (Russian Federation); Mr. CHANG Dong-hee (Republic of Korea); Mr. JAZAÏRY (Algeria) and Mr. MEYER (Canada) made statements.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.