

**MEETING 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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ENGLISH ONLY

**Fourth Meeting
Geneva, 10-14 December 2007**

**Meeting of Experts
Geneva, 20-24 August 2007**

Item 5 of the agenda

**Consideration of ways and means to enhance
national implementation, including enforcement
of national legislation, strengthening of
national institutions and coordination among
national law enforcement institutions**

COMPLIANCE WITH THE BTWC

Submitted by Italy

1. During the Sixth Review Conference it was decided, by consensus, to schedule four annual intersessional meetings of the States Parties prior to the Seventh Review Conference, to be held not later than the end of 2011. The Conference should consider the work and outcome of these meetings and decide on any further action. The current expert meeting will take into consideration the following two issues:

- (i) Ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions;
- (ii) Regional and sub-regional cooperation on BWC implementation.

2. In such a context and pursuing compliance with the BTWC, Italy adopted, during the period 2004-2007, in addition to the measures already illustrated at the 2003 Session, the following new measures:

(a) The Italian Ministry of Health has actively participated in the implementation of surveillance, identification and diagnosis of infectious diseases within the WHO, the FAO and the OIE. All infectious diseases are now being notified on the national territory according to a Decree approved on 15 December 1990.

3. All information on infectious diseases is circulated through the Ministry of Health, which publishes the National Epidemiological Bulletin through the Ministry's website: www.sanita.it.

4. In order to give an efficient sanitary response in the event of biological, chemical or radiological terrorist attacks against the Nation, a national defense Plan was prepared, inter alia, by the Ministry of Health. This Plan is a reference for all national, regional and local agencies involved in the protection of national health;

(b) The National Center for the Prevention and the Control of the Diseases (Centro Nazionale per la Prevenzione e il Controllo delle Malattie - CCM) has been established, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, by Law No. 138 dated 26 May 2004, entitled "Urgent interventions to face dangers for public health". The new structure aims at facing sanitary emergencies, new infections such as SARS, Avian influenza (bird flu), hemorrhagic fever and emergencies that could be provoked by bioterroristic actions.

5. The CCM is a network of structures which already existed in Italy; it operates in coordination with the Italian Institute of Health (ISS), the High Institute for the prevention and security of labor (ISPESL), the Zooprofilattic Institutes, universities, and others laboratories.

6. The CCM is an active body in the updating of all the knowledge on biological and chemical agents which could be used by terrorists, on the basis of a deep evaluation of risks and a coordination of surveillance plans and active prevention in view of an immediate response.

7. The specific tasks of the CCM are:

- (i) Risk analysis;
- (ii) Coordination with the regions with regard to surveillance and prevention plans for national alert and early response, with special reference to bioterrorism;
- (iii) Promotion, updating and training of national and regional staff;
- (iv) Verification of health plans;
- (v) Liaison with other existing institutions in the European Union, in particular as coordinator of the European Network of Infectious Diseases (EUNID)¹, and the international context;
- (vi) Supply of information.

¹ The European Network of Infectious Disease Physicians (EUNID) is a pan-European network of infectious disease clinicians with experience in the management of highly infectious diseases and/or high security isolation units. EUNID has 25 national officials and representatives, from 16 Member States (the original 15 Member States, and Estonia). EUNID is led and coordinated by the Istituto Nazionale per le Malattie Infettive (INMI), IRCCS, Lazzaro Spallanzani, Rome, Italy. A five member scientific committee assists the Italian coordination team with medical and scientific aspects of their work.

8. The CCM mainly deals with the following topics:

- (i) Infectious and diffused diseases;
- (ii) Promotion of health and healthy life;
- (iii) Environment and climate;
- (iv) Vaccines and vaccinations;
- (v) Accidents;
- (vi) Bioterrorism.

9. To be in line with its task, CCM organized in Rome, in May 2007, a Workshop on the “Critical aspects of Highly Infectious Diseases” and in particular on:

- (i) Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response in the Context of the Revised International Health Regulations;
- (ii) Laboratory diagnostic strategy for dealing with high-threat and newly emerging pathogens:
 - Class A Bacteria;
 - Countermeasure development for Smallpox;
 - Agents of emerging viral Hemorrhagic fevers;
- (iii) Preparedness and Response:
 - Network of isolation facilities in Europe;
 - Network of P4 laboratories in Europe;
 - EU research programs in emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases;
 - Research in emerging infections;

(c) According to a Ministerial Decree approved on 8 November 2005, a “Center of emergency against bioterrorism” (Centro di emergenza contro il bioterrorismo) is under construction in Rome, by the Ministry of Health; its aim is to face possible emergencies of public health of international relevance which could involve the risk of widespread diseases or circumstances that represent a threat to public health. It will be a central operational structure, at national level, hosting a staff capable of facing bioterrorist attacks and endemics, bird flu included. This Center will be the structure through which the Minister of Health, his assistants and officers of the Ministry of Interior will operate in case of emergency. It will be fully equipped to handle crisis and threats to public health (animal diseases included). It will also ensure training of specialized personnel and warehouse of massive supply of special and unusual medicines, vaccines and other protective material to face possible pandemics;

(d) The Landau Network Centro Volta (LNCV) located in Como (Italy), in collaboration with the Partnership for Global Security (Washington D.C.- US) and with the support of the Analysis and Policy Planning Unit of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit (BWC ISU), the US Civilian Research & Development Foundation (CRDF), the Russian International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC) and the Municipality of Como, announced a Workshop on: “Strengthening a Global Biosecurity/Biosafety Framework and coping with the Biotechnology Revolution” to be held in Como in October 25- 26, 2007;

(e) By Law No. 27, dated 15 January 2004, Italy has ratified the Cartagena Protocol on biosecurity as far as the trans-border movements of GMO are concerned.

10. Other measures related to the above mentioned issues are still under consideration by the competent Italian Ministries.
