
**Seventh 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**

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Item 10 of the agenda

Review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its Article XII

China's views on strengthening the effectiveness of the BWC

Submitted by China

1. China has consistently advocated the comprehensive prohibition and thorough destruction of biological weapons, and firmly opposes the proliferation of such weapons and their technology. China supports the purposes and objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention (hereinafter abbreviated as “the Convention”), and conscientiously and strictly fulfils its obligations under that Convention. It supports the comprehensive enhancement of the Convention's effectiveness, and actively takes part in and supports the multilateral process aimed at achieving that enhancement.

2. Currently, the situation of implementation of the Convention is generally good, the depth and breadth of that implementation by States Parties to the Convention continue to increase, and the international community has achieved consensus on the continuation and strengthening of the multilateral process. On the other hand, the Convention also faces many challenges, and its effectiveness and universality need to be further strengthened.

3. China attaches a high degree of importance to the Seventh Review Conference, and stands ready to explore practical measures for comprehensively enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention with all parties under the new circumstances. China's views on Convention compliance and monitoring, confidence-building measures, international cooperation, the impact of biotechnology on the Convention, the intersessional process, and the Implementation Support Unit are as follows:

Compliance and monitoring

4. The best way to promote the effectiveness of the Convention is to conclude, through multilateral negotiation, a protocol to the Convention that includes a monitoring mechanism and that comprehensively enhances its effectiveness. Prior to concluding such a protocol, there is a real need to enhance the Convention's effectiveness by means of promoting compliance in ways that are appropriate and consistent with the interests of States Parties. China supports the discussion of national implementation measures in the intersession meetings, so as to promote the taking of practical steps by States Parties and further strengthen national implementation capacity-building.

5. The investigative mechanism established under article VI of the Convention provides the best way to deal with violations of the Convention. If a State Party finds that

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another State Party is acting in violation of the Convention, it may lodge a complaint with the Security Council of the United Nations, which shall in turn decide whether or not to launch an investigation.

Confidence-building measures (CBMs)

6. In view of the lack of an effective monitoring mechanism in the Convention, CBMs are an important means for States Parties to display compliance and bolster mutual trust, and are also important in that they are politically binding.

7. Currently, insufficient universality is the most pressing challenge facing the CBM mechanism, and bolstering that universality is the primary imperative. China encourages States Parties to submit CBM materials proactively. Considering that States Parties face numerous difficulties in submitting CBM materials, China supports the provision of assistance to States in need of it, in the form of seminars, training sessions and so forth. In order to assist States Parties to make better use of CBM materials, we recommend that such materials should be translated into the six official languages of the United Nations.

8. In order to make CBMs more effectively useful under the new circumstances, China agrees to appropriate improvements in CBM content, on the condition that the national circumstances of each State and its ability to accept them are taken into consideration. Such improvements could include increasing the publicity given to biosafety laws and regulations, as well as to the national focal point for compliance with the Convention. The issue of CBM improvement could be discussed by an expert group in the intersessional meeting process, or a working group could be set up for that purpose.

9. Article V of the Convention provides that States Parties consult one another and cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in the process of complying with the Convention. China supports the resolution of CBM-related issues by each State through bilateral negotiations with the other State involved, using the consultation and clarification procedure called for under article V of the Convention.

International cooperation

10. China supports effective international cooperation, which contributes to increasing the ability of States Parties to comply with the Convention, promotes the effectiveness of the Convention, attracts other countries to join the Convention, and ultimately motivates the healthy and sustainable development of the Convention.

11. China supports the working paper on establishing a mechanism for comprehensive implementation of article X of the Convention, put forward by the Non-Aligned Movement, and supports taking up the issue of international cooperation for specific discussion, by a meeting of experts within the intersessional meeting process or through the establishment of a working group, promoting the exchange of information on international cooperation among States parties, and doing away with unreasonable limitations that run counter to the aim of international cooperation, so as to achieve the goals of mobilizing resources of all kinds, coordinating cooperative relationships, and deepening international cooperation.

Impact of biotechnology on the Convention

12. The current rapid development of biotechnology is playing an increasingly important role in helping mankind to overcome disease and promote health, but at the same time new types of biotechnology are being used for hostile purposes, constituting a growing potential threat to humanity and posing greater challenges to strict compliance with the Convention.

13. China supports strengthening the assessment, within the framework of the Convention, of the impact of scientific and technological development, and supports taking up this issue for specific discussion, by means of a meeting of experts within the

intersessional meeting process or through the establishment of a working group. States Parties are the primary assessors of the impact of scientific and technological development, and the results of such discussion should be provided by the meetings of States Parties to the subsequent Review Conference for review. Representatives of the academic and business communities concerned could also make useful contributions to the assessment process.

The intersessional meeting process

14. China approves of and supports the current intersessional meeting process, whereby meetings of States Parties and of experts are used to promote compliance with the Convention.

15. In order to promote greater flexibility and efficiency, China supports making appropriate improvements in the intersessional process currently in use. Expert meetings can continue to be held, or working groups open to all States Parties can be set up, to carry out specialized discussions of such topics of broad concern as international cooperation, national implementation measures, assessment of the impact of scientific and technical development, and CBMs. Results of the discussions should be made available to the meetings of the States Parties, which would in turn submit a report on them to the subsequent Review Conference. Consultation and consensus should be the consistent overall working method, whether for the meetings of experts, of working groups, or of States Parties.

16. In view of the substantive requirements of compliance work, an appropriate extension of the meeting period, for example to three weeks, could be considered.

Implementation Support Unit

17. Since its establishment in 2006, the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) has operated smoothly, and has played a positive role in strengthening communication among States Parties, promoting universality of the Convention, and CBMs. In view of the Convention's lack of a standing body, the establishment and maintenance of a small, efficient, capable temporary technical secretariat with reasonable and clearly-defined functions benefits the promotion of compliance with the Convention and strengthens its effectiveness.

18. China supports the strengthening and improvement of the work of the ISU, and supports the extension of its mandate until the next Review Conference. On the basis of its current functionality, the ISU can be of further usefulness in such areas as promoting international cooperation, facilitating the submission of CBMs, strengthening external contacts and promoting the universality of the Convention. Following the finalization of the next intersession work plan, an expansion of the scope and budget of the ISU can be contemplated as the need arises.
