

The Preparatory Committee for the Seventh BWC Review Conference

As reported in *Review no 33* (January 2011), the Meeting of States Parties of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) on 6 to 10 December 2010 had included in its Final Report (BWC/MSP/2010/6 dated 17 December 2010) a paragraph which addressed the arrangements for the Review Conference in 2011. This stated that the Meeting of States Parties approved the nomination by the Western Group of Ambassador Paul van den IJssel of the Netherlands to be President of the Seventh Review Conference and Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. It was further decided that the Preparatory Committee for the Seventh Review Conference would be held in Geneva from 13 to 15 April 2011, and that the Seventh Review Conference would be held in Geneva from 5 to 22 December 2011. In addition, it was noted that the cost estimates for the Preparatory Committee and the Sixth Review Conference, as set out in document BWC/MSP/2010/5 Rev.1, were approved. (The Final Report of the December 2010 MSP, together with other official BWC documentation, is available at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc>.)

Preparatory Committee Meeting, 13 to 15 April 2011: Opening Plenary Session

The Preparatory Committee Meeting for the Seventh Review Conference was opened on Wednesday 13 April 2011 in plenary session by Mr Jarmo Sareva, Director of the Geneva Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, who welcomed the representatives from the States Parties.

93 States Parties participated in the Preparatory Committee for the Seventh Review Conference – Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America,

Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This was fifteen more than at the Preparatory Committee in April 2006 for the Sixth Review Conference, as twenty-five states (Albania, Armenia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Oman, Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Serbia, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe) participated in 2011 but had not done so in 2006, whilst ten States (Benin, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Latvia, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Sudan, Viet Nam and Yemen) who had taken part in 2006, did not do so in 2011.

Three Signatory States participated: Egypt, Haiti and Myanmar, three less than at the Preparatory Committee Meeting in April 2006, as Haiti participated, whilst Madagascar and the United Arab Emirates had become States Parties (and both participated at the Prep Com), and Nepal and Syrian Arab Republic did not. One State neither Party nor Signatory (Israel) was granted Observer status; the same as in 2006 when Israel participated as an observer. The Convention currently has 164 States Parties and 13 Signatory States (see <http://www.unog.ch/bwc>). One specialized agency and intergovernmental organization (European Union) participated as observers, as did the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and eleven NGOs: BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP), Ferdous International Foundation, International Security and Biopolicy Institute (ISBI), James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), Landau Network-Centro Volta (LNCV), Research Group for Biological Arms Control, London School of Economics, the University of Bradford, the University of Sussex Harvard-Sussex Program (HSP), US National Academy of Sciences, and Verification Research Training and Information Centre (VERTIC).

About 350 individuals from States Parties participated, of whom over 125 had come from capitals, some 80 more than the over 270 individuals from States Parties that participated in the Preparatory Committee in April 2006, about 100 of whom had come from capitals.

In the opening formalities, in accordance with the provisional agenda (BWC/CONF.VII/PC/INF.3) Mr Jarmo Sareva, Director of the Geneva Branch, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, noted that item 2 was the election of the Chairman, and said that Ambassador Paul van den IJssel of the Netherlands had been nominated by the Western Group as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. Ambassador Paul van den IJssel was elected by acclamation. Mr Sareva then congratulated him on his election and invited him to take the Chair.

Ambassador van den IJssel then took the **Chair** and made some introductory remarks in which he thanked States Parties for electing him. He then went on to say:

I am committed to working closely with all States Parties in a transparent, inclusive and constructive manner in order to secure a positive outcome at the Review Conference. I know I do not need to speak to you, the States Parties, about the importance of the Biological Weapons Convention as a fundamental pillar of global security. Among ourselves, we can take that as given. What I do want to say is that we are now embarking on the first formal steps of a crucially important task: reviewing the Convention to ensure that its noble and vital objectives are being realised.

The Seventh Review Conference comes at a time where extraordinary advances in biological science and technology promise ever more significant benefits for human development, across a wide range of fields, but where we are also encountering growing and unfamiliar risks. Just as importantly, the Seventh Review Conference comes at a time when the community of States Parties is perhaps the best placed it has been for a decade or more to address the challenges facing the Convention. The collegial spirit and constructive collaboration of States Parties over the four years of the intersessional process have built a sound foundation for the Review Conference. The sense of common purpose and pragmatic optimism that has emerged from the process is a precious asset that we should now turn to the service of our broader goal. If we can do this, I am confident that we can succeed in delivering a comprehensive consensus outcome at the Review Conference that substantially improves the operation of the Convention. Be assured that I will do everything possible to contribute to this positive atmosphere.

Our work here at the Preparatory Committee will be mostly procedural. This may not be glamorous or exciting, but it is nonetheless important. We must ensure that we have all the necessary arrangements in place to allow us to make the best, most effective use of our limited time in December. We must have a structure that will ensure that all States Parties will be able to contribute to the review of the Convention in a fair and efficient way: to raise their concerns, to put forward their ideas, to highlight problems, and to propose solutions. We need to create the space to build the future of the Convention.

And although our focus will be primarily on matters of procedure, I hope we will also have time to hold an initial exchange on substantive issues. Once we have finished with our procedural business, I would encourage delegations to share their views on their hopes and aspirations for the Review Conference, and on what they see as the future of the Convention. I also hope that delegations will take advantage of the presence of many colleagues in Geneva, as well as many representatives of civil society, to hold informal discussions and to share ideas and proposals.

*As I have said repeatedly, and will continue to emphasise, I want to work together with you all to find the right balance between **ambition** and **realism**. We have a tremendous opportunity before us, and a great responsibility. We must rise to the challenge. [emphasis in original]*

The Chairman concluded his opening remarks by saying that he would like to move straight on with the election of the other officers of the Committee.

Cuba, as coordinator of the Non-Aligned group, announced that Ambassador Desra Percaya of Indonesia would be that group's nominee for Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and Chair of the Committee of the Whole for the Review Conference. Romania, as coordinator of the Eastern European group, announced that Counsellor Judit Körömi of Hungary would be that group's nominee for Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and Chair of the Drafting Committee for the Review Conference. These nominations were endorsed by the Preparatory Committee. In addition, the Preparatory Committee authorized the Bureau to decide technical and other matters prior to the Review Conference. The Preparatory Committee then moved on to consider its Agenda (BWC/CONF.VII/PC/1) which followed the Agenda of the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth Review Conference in 2006. This was agreed, thus completing Agenda item 3.

The Chairman noted that as the Preparatory Committee was procedural, there was no agenda item for general debate although there were two points at which statements could be made. He proposed that if there were any Group statements, these could be taken under Agenda item 5 *Organization of the Review Conference*. If there were any statements by individual States Parties then it was proposed to take these under Agenda item 9 *Other business*.

The meeting went on to consider Agenda item 4 *Organization of work of the Preparatory Committee*, first agreeing that decision making would be, as traditionally, by consensus, then that the languages would be the six UN languages, and finally agreeing to the participation of Signatory States and non-States Parties as recorded above. The participation of the European Union as an inter-governmental organization was also approved. Consideration was then given to the participation of NGOs, which it was agreed should follow past practice: NGOs could attend public meetings and receive the documents, but not participate in discussion.

The Preparatory Committee then went on to consider Agenda item 5 *Organization of the Review Conference*, and NGOs were asked to leave. Statements were made in closed session by Cuba (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States), Indonesia (on behalf of the ASEAN group), by Iran, and then by Hungary on behalf of the European Union. Unlike at the Preparatory Committee in 2006, when Austria (on behalf of the EU) and Canada (on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand) approached the Chair requesting that NGOs be permitted to be present during the Group statements and NGOs were subsequently invited back into the room, this did not happen in 2011. It had later emerged at the Preparatory Committee meeting in 2006 that there was no indication in the records of the Preparatory Committee meeting in April 2001 as to when NGOs had been present and agreement had been reached that in April 2006, NGOs would be present for the first four Agenda items and then excluded until the penultimate Agenda item 8 *Report of the Preparatory Committee to the Review Conference*. As NGOs were present in April 2011 for the statements made by individual States Parties under Agenda item 9 *Other business*, their exclusion from the Group statements in April 2011 made no sense. It is to be hoped that future Preparatory Committee meetings will recognize this and allow NGOs to

be present at least for the group statements under Agenda item 5 as well as for the individual statements under Agenda item 9.

Cuba, speaking on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties said that at the Seventh Review Conference, *we will be at a significant moment to reflect on the progress made in the full realization of the goals and objectives of the Convention since the Sixth Review Conference.* The statement went on to say that *our Group is of the view that in accordance with Article XII the objective of the Review Conference should be a comprehensive review of the operation of the Convention, including consideration of the work of the intersessional Meetings of States Parties, with a view to assuring that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the Convention are being met. The Review Conference will also have to consider further measures to further strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention.* The statement continued *The Group believes that the RevCon provides a good opportunity to discuss the resumption of multilateral negotiations on a legally binding instrument to comprehensively strengthen the Convention. The Group reiterates that the BWC forms a composite whole and that while it is possible to address related issues separately, it is necessary for all the interlinked elements of the Convention to be dealt with in a balanced and comprehensive manner, whether they relate to regulation, compliance or promotion.* The statement concluded by saying *In the light of challenges and risks posed by rapid developments in the field of biological science, it will be pertinent for the forthcoming Review Conference to consider and decide on future measures that could further strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention in its entirety.*

Indonesia then spoke on behalf of the ASEAN Member States Parties to the BWC (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam) and the ASEAN Signatory State (Myanmar), saying that ASEAN associates itself with the statement made by Cuba on behalf of the NAM. The statement said that *ASEAN is committed to efforts which will lead to prevention of proliferation and finally, elimination of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins being used as weapons, by strengthening international cooperation, taking into account recent science and technological developments, and by promoting the peaceful uses of biological agents or toxin for the benefit of all mankind.* The statement went on to say that *we support an agenda which includes a comprehensive review of the preambular paragraphs, purposes, and all articles of the Convention, a follow-up to the recommendations and decisions made at the 6th BWC RevCon, as well as the future course of the Convention. Therefore, we would like to lend our support to your proposed agenda and we remain flexible in this matter.* The statement concluded by saying that *we support the suggested background documents to be requested by the PrepCom and propose that the PrepCom also requests for a background information document on the status and existing bilateral, regional or any other form of*

cooperation relevant to the Convention, to be compiled from information provided by States Parties as well as by relevant international organizations.

Iran then spoke, saying that Iran associated itself with the statement made by Cuba on behalf of the NAM. The statement said that *In order to contribute to the successful conclusion of the said Conference, I would like to reaffirm on the following elements:*

- 1. The objective of the Review Conference should be a comprehensive review of the operation of the Convention. The Review Conference will also have to consider future measures to further strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention. Due to the pivotal role of the BWC in international and regional peace and security we believe that the multilateral negotiations should be resumed on a legally binding instrument to comprehensively strengthen the convention including in the area of international cooperation for peaceful purposes. Piecemeal solutions or fragmented proposals are not an option. Therefore discussion on resuming the multilateral negotiations on a legally binding instrument to comprehensively strengthen the convention should clearly be appeared on the agenda of the Review Conference and there should be an ample opportunity in the next Review Conference to discuss this very important issue to explore ways and means to respond to the wish of international community on early conclusion of such an instrument.*
- 2. We are also of the view that the universality of the Convention is of high priority and importance and therefore practical steps should be taken to achieve this goal. The seventh BWC Review Conference should seriously address this issue and devise an action plan to ensure the universality of the Convention. This action plan should comprise of concrete measures including prohibition of transfer to non parties, of material and technology which could be used in development of biological weapons. ...*
- 3. The promotion of international cooperation as provided for in Article X and removing the arbitrary and politically motivated denials should be adequately dealt with in the next Review Conference and an action plan consisting of practical and concrete measures to strengthen the implementation of the said Article, as the best way to reinforce the Convention, should be worked up. ... The adoption of a comprehensive Plan of Action for strengthening Article X comprising of three categories of mandates to the states parties, Secretary General of the UN and the ISU or UNODA as tabled by the NAM during the Six Review Conference is the minimum requirement that we expect from the next review conference.*
- 4. Intersessional process, with its current mandate, has provided an appropriate framework for exchanging experience and promoting common understanding among States Parties on the various aspects of the Convention. We believe that embarking unrealistic and ambitious approaches would only complicate the issue and adversely affect the goal.*

5. *On the CBMS, I would like to recall that annual exchange of information regime established with the aim of increasing transparency and confidence among States Parties should lead to the promotion of the international cooperation in the field of peaceful biological activities. Otherwise, the interest of States Parties to voluntarily submit their annual reports on the CBMs may diminish.*
6. *In our last meetings in 2010, due to the high importance of Article VII of the Convention, there was an ample discussion on the provision of assistance upon request by any State Party in the case of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons and the challenges it is facing. In this regard, the next Review Conference would be an excellent opportunity to make a decision on devising a detailed procedure to facilitate the implementation of the obligations under Article VII, through, inter alia, mandating the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs to establish an inventory of the types of assistance that the States Parties could provide pursuant to Article VII if requested. My delegation is prepared to provide concrete proposals in this regard and actively participate in the efforts leading to this aim.*

The statement concluded by saying that the *outcome of the Review Conference should be balanced in addressing the promotional as well as regulatory aspects of the Convention in order to ensure a smooth and successful Review Conference.*

Hungary, speaking on behalf of the European Union and eleven associated States, said that *The EU's objectives for the Seventh Review Conference are: building confidence in compliance, supporting national implementation, and promoting universalisation. The European Union also remains committed to identifying effective mechanisms to enhance and provide confidence in compliance with the Convention, including possible verification measures.*

The statement went on to say that *One of the EU main priorities is to work on effective modalities to **build confidence in compliance** among States Parties. Greater transparency can be achieved by a wide range of measures that could include confidence building measures, information exchanges, formal declarations of relevant facilities and activities, consultations between States Parties – informal and formal, bilateral and multi-lateral on any aspect of implementation and compliance with the Convention; it could also include site visits and inspections to provide better scrutiny of, and insights into, the nature and extent of State Parties biological activities. The statement continued the current CBM-system which was last modified 20 years ago suffers from insufficient quantity and quality of participation and should be updated. It then goes on to say that States Parties should explore, as a matter of priority, possible ways and means of strengthening the Convention's provisions for confidence in compliance.*

The statement went on a *second major EU objective is to **support effective national implementation**. The EU said that national implementation should be one of the topics of the work programme for the next intersessional round.*

and that an increased role for the ISU was seen *in further strengthening national implementation of the BTWC by providing an advisory service on national implementation and setting up a reference library. It went on to say that The third major objective for the EU is to **promote universality**. It continued States Parties could consider the adoption of an action plan on universalisation, which could be managed by the ISU, with concrete steps and activities.*

The statement added that the EU *gives its support to three mainstreamed elements. The **first** is that States Parties should be offered opportunities whereby they can request assistance and exchange information under Article X. To that aim, CBMs could be revised and structured in a way that allows States Parties to exchange information about requests/offers/activities concerning cooperation and assistance. The **second** was in regard to the ISU where in order that the ISU can carry out new activities, such as promoting universality and provide adequate inputs in the review of science and technology developments and by further supporting the CBM system by providing support in the review of the declarations, the European Union supports an adequate expansion of the current staff. The **third** was that the EU seeks an agreement on a new substantive work programme for the next five years with more effective working arrangements and action orientated outcomes. The work programme should fully take into account the continuing rapid developments in science and technology and their possible impacts on the Convention; bring about an enhanced dialogue with stakeholders such as industry and the academic world, i.e. on regulatory frameworks and standards with regard to biosafety and biosecurity management; consider national implementation, universalisation, assistance and cooperation and consider the review of CBM declarations.[emphasis in original] The statement concluded by saying that the working paper (BWC/CONF.VII/PC/INF.2 dated 13 April 2011) which the EU has distributed provides further elaboration on many of the priorities. Further elaboration will be in the European Union Position for the Review Conference – and the EU working paper says that its Position will be adopted by the European Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the following weeks after the Preparatory Committee of the Seventh Review Conference.*

Although there was no statement made on behalf of the JACKSNNZ group (Japan, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand), an information paper (BWC/CONF.VII/PC/INF.4) entitled *Possible approaches to education and awareness-raising among life scientists* was circulated by Australia, Japan and Switzerland on behalf of the JACKSNNZ group, and Sweden. This information paper concludes by saying that *States Parties, with a view to enhance the implementation of the Convention through education of and awareness-raising among life scientists as a preventive measure in the spirit of Article IV of the Convention, could consider:*

- a. *that the frequent lack of awareness of aspects related to biosecurity and the obligations of the Convention among life scientists has to be addressed more urgently, strategically, and comprehensively;*
- b. *that these efforts could serve, inter alia, as a basis for*

individual educational and awareness-raising activities by the States Parties on their national level as well as cooperation at an international level;

The paper then sets out more detailed proposals for how education and awareness-raising might be achieved amongst the life sciences.

Side Events

Three side events took place on **Tuesday 12 April 2011**, the day prior to the start of the Preparatory Committee. In the morning from 10.00 to 11.30, an event was held by the International Security and Biopolicy Institute entitled *Violently Inflicted Disease: The Need for New Law*. A further side event took place in the afternoon from 15.00 to 16.30 when the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) together with Sweden and the United Kingdom held an event on *Addressing Future Challenges to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in Connection with Scientific and Technological Developments*. This was followed by an event from 16.30 to 18.00 by the Harvard Sussex Program (HSP) entitled *Options and Proposals for BWC Science and Technology Reviews*.

On **Wednesday 13 April 2011**, there was a lunchtime event by the University of Bradford and the InterAcademies Panel – The Global Network of Science Academies entitled *Preparing for the 7th Review Conference & Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention through Education*.

On **Thursday 14 April 2011**, there was a breakfast event from 09.00 to 10.00 by the InterAcademies Panel – The Global Network of Science Academies entitled *Trends in Science and Technology Relevant to the BWC* and a lunchtime event by the Geneva Forum entitled *Opportunities to Enhance the BWC Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)*.

Outcome of the Preparatory Committee Meeting

The Preparatory Committee continued, in closed session, to consider Agenda item 5 *Organization of the Review Conference*. It first addressed (a) **Date and duration of the Review Conference** and decided that it should take place in Geneva from 5 to 22 December 2011.

It then considered (b) **Provisional agenda**. The Chairman had submitted a draft provisional agenda in BWC/CONF.VII/PC/L.2 which was similar to that put forward by the Preparatory Committee in 2006 with the replacement of the 2006 Agenda item 11. *Consideration of issues identified in the review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in Article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action* by the 2011 Agenda item 11. *Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Sixth Review Conference*. It is understood that there was some discussion about the draft provisional agenda in BWC/CONF.VII/PC/L.2 as some States Parties wanted to stay with precedent and thus adopt a draft agenda that was identical with that adopted in 2006. In the event, at 15.00 on 14 April 2011, the Chairman tabled proposed amendments to the draft provisional agenda which replaced items 11 and 12 in BWC/CONF.VII/PC/L.2 with:

11. *Consideration of issues identified in the review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its Article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action*

11.bis. *Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Sixth Review Conference and the question of the future review of the Convention*

12. *Other matters*

These amendments reintroduced the Agenda item 11 that had appeared in the 2006 draft Agenda, retained as 11.bis the new item 11 proposed in BWC/CONF.VII/PC/L.2 and added to this the words “*and the question of the future review of the Convention*” which had, in 2006, appeared as part of Agenda item 12, and introduced a shortened version of Agenda item 12 that simply said *Other matters*. These amendments were accepted and incorporated into the final version of the draft provisional agenda for the Seventh Review Conference that is attached as Annex I to the report of the Preparatory Committee. The final version is thus as follows;

Provisional agenda for the Seventh Review Conference

1. *Opening of the Conference*
2. *Election of the President*
3. *Adoption of the agenda*
4. *Submission of the final report of the Preparatory Committee*
5. *Adoption of the Rules of Procedure*
6. *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*
7. *Credentials of representatives to the Conference*
 - (a) *Appointment of the Credentials Committee*
 - (b) *Report of the Credentials Committee*
8. *Confirmation of the nomination of the Secretary-General*
9. *Programme of work*
10. *Review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its Article XII*
 - (a) *General debate*
 - (b) *Articles I-XV*
 - (c) *Preambular paragraphs and purposes of the Convention*
11. *Consideration of issues identified in the review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its Article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action*
12. *Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Sixth Review Conference and the question of future review of the Convention*

13. *Other matters*

14. *Report of the Committee of the Whole*

15. *Report of the Drafting Committee*

16. *Preparation and adoption of the final document(s)*

It should also be noted that the Report of the Preparatory Committee in regard to the Provisional agenda includes in paragraph 19 the following sentence:

In connection with the agreement to recommend this agenda, the Chairman noted his understanding that the agenda was sufficiently comprehensive to facilitate a broad and thorough review of all aspects of the Convention, and that it would allow States Parties the opportunity to raise and discuss fully all issues that they believe are relevant to the objectives and operation of the Convention, including issues discussed at this Preparatory Committee and at previous review conferences.

A statement was made by Iran in regard to the Provisional agenda in which Iran said that they had decided to join the consensus on this issue, although they were not totally satisfied, based on the *understanding that the last version of the Agenda accompanied with your explanatory statement which has just been delivered to the meeting will provide ample opportunity for this and other delegations to raise and discuss in depth the issue of the resumption of the negotiation on the legally binding instrument to comprehensively strengthen all provisions of the BWC convention in the next Review Conference.*

The Preparatory Committee then went on to consider (c) **Draft rules of procedure.** The Chairman had submitted draft rules as BWC/CONF.VII/PC/L.1. It was agreed to amend these in the following respects:

- a. In regard to Rule 5 it was agreed that instead of the Conference electing *a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman for the Drafting Committee* this should be amended to the Conference electing *a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen* for the Drafting Committee. This was identical to the amendment agreed in 2006 by the Preparatory Committee to the Sixth Review Conference.
- b. In regard to Rule 8 it was agreed that instead of the General Committee being *composed of the President of the Conference, who shall preside, 20 Vice-Presidents, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee and the Chairman of the Credentials Committee* the Preparatory Committee agreed to recommend that the General Committee should be composed of *the President of the Review Conference, the 20 Vice-Presidents, the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Committee of the Whole, the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Drafting Committee and the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Credentials Committee, to be elected in accordance with Rule 5, the three Regional Group Coordinators, and the Depositories.* This was again identical to the amendment agreed in 2006 by the Preparatory Committee to the Sixth Review Conference.

The Preparatory Committee also considered a proposal in regard to Rule 43 in respect of public and private meetings. The Chairman in a note dated 13 April 2011 put forward *Suggested understandings on the Draft Rules of Procedure, to be included in the Report of the Preparatory Committee*, in which he proposed a new paragraph for the report of the Preparatory Committee that would read as follows:

22. *The Preparatory Committee also agreed to recommend that with respect to public and private meetings referred to in Rule 43, meetings of the Committees, unless otherwise decided, will be held on the same basis as the working sessions of the Meeting of Experts and the Meeting of States Parties held from 2007 to 2010.*

This proposal sought to carry forward the arrangements that had applied to the Meetings of Experts and the Meetings of States Parties in the intersessional process between 2007 and 2010, when meetings had remained open to NGOs, thereby enabling them to gain a much better appreciation of the concerns of the States Parties. At the Preparatory Committee there was disagreement with the proposed paragraph 22 and the Chairman proposed a revised version in a note dated 14 April 2011 that read as follows:

22. *The Preparatory Committee also agreed to recommend that with respect to public and private meetings referred to in Rule 43, representatives of inter-governmental organisations, scientific and professional bodies, and non-governmental organisations may attend and observe meetings of the Committees, unless otherwise decided.*

There was still disagreement with this proposed paragraph and the Chairman then proposed a further revision in a note dated 11.00 on 14 April 2011 that read as follows:

22. *The Preparatory Committee also agreed to recommend that with respect to meetings referred to in Rule 43 (2), the Committees may decide to hold certain meetings in public.*

This revised paragraph 22 was accepted and appears in the Report of the Preparatory Committee. With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that the initial proposal was a step too far in that it would have applied to all Committees – i.e. the Committee of the Whole, the Drafting Committee and the Credentials Committee – whereas the Committee of the Whole would have been the Committee that could with advantage be held in public thereby enabling NGOs to better appreciate the views of the States Parties. It also appears that the comparison in the first version of paragraph 22 of the Committees of the Review Conference with the intersessional meetings was unacceptable to some States Parties, as from their point of view it underestimated the difference between the Review Conference – at which decisions are made – and the intersessional meetings – where any decisions are deferred to the next Review Conference.

The Preparatory Committee then went on to consider **(d) Background documentation**. The Chairman in his letter to the States Parties on 25 January 2011 had attached a list of the background documents requested for the Sixth Review Conference:

- (a) *A background information document on the history and operation of the confidence -building measures agreed at the Second Review Conference and revised at the Third Review Conference. The document should include data in summary tabular form on the participation of States Parties in the measures since the last Review Conference;*
- (b) *A background information document on compliance by States Parties with all their obligations under the Convention. For the purpose of compiling this document, the Secretariat would request States Parties to provide information regarding compliance with all the provisions of the Convention;*
- (c) *A background information document on new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties as well as from information provided by relevant international organisations;*
- (d) *A background information document on developments since the last Review Conference in other international organizations which may be relevant to the Convention;*
- (e) *A background information document showing the additional understandings and agreements reached by previous Review Conferences relating to each article of the Convention, extracted from the respective Final Declarations of these conferences;*
- (f) *A background information document on the status of universalization of the Convention.*

In his speaking notes to the Group meetings in February 2011, the Chairman said that *Another important issue for the PrepCom will be deciding on the background documents we request from the Implementation Support Unit in order to inform our preparations.*

- *The list of background documents requested in 2006 was attached to my letter: we can consider whether all of these are still relevant, or if there are others we should add.*
- *The background paper on compliance may be one that needs attention and review. In the past it has been a simple compilation of submissions from States Parties, of widely varying format and detail. Do States Parties find this useful, or should we look at another approach?*

The Preparatory Committee decided to request the Implementation Support Unit to prepare eight background documents as follows – changes from those requested in 2006 for the Sixth Review Conference are shown as bold additions and deletions:

- (a) A background information document on the history and operation of the confidence-building measures agreed at the Second Review Conference and revised at the Third Review Conference. The document should include data

- in summary tabular form on the participation of States Parties in the measures since the last Review Conference;
- (b) **A background information document on compliance by States Parties with all their obligations under the Convention, For the purpose of compiling this document, the Secretariat would request States Parties to provide information regarding compliance with all the provisions of the Convention; to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties;**
- (c) A background information document on new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties as well as from information provided by relevant international organisations;
- (d) A background information document on developments since the last Review Conference in other international organizations which may be relevant to the Convention;
- (e) A background information document showing the additional understandings and agreements reached by previous Review Conferences relating to each article of the Convention, extracted from the respective Final Declarations of these conferences;
- (f) **A background information document showing the common understandings reached by the Meetings of States Parties during the intersessional programme held from 2007 to 2010;**
- (g) A background information document on the status of universalization of the Convention;
- (h) **A background information document on the implementation of Article X, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties, including information submitted pursuant to paragraph 54 of the Final Declaration of the Sixth Review Conference.**

The two additional background documents are thus on the common understandings reached by the intersessional programme from 2007 to 2010 and on the implementation of Article X to be compiled from information submitted by the States Parties.

The Preparatory Committee then went on to consider **(e) Publicity** and **(f) Final documents** and agreed identical outcomes to those agreed at the Preparatory Committee in April 2006 – namely that the Secretariat should issue press releases and that an appropriate agenda item should be included in the provisional Agenda for the Review Conference.

The next item to be considered was Agenda item 6 *Appointment of a provisional Secretary-General* when the Preparatory Committee agreed an identical outcome to that agreed in April 2006 – namely to invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations to nominate an official to act on behalf of the Preparatory Committee as provisional Secretary-General of the Review Conference.

The Preparatory Committee then considered Agenda item 7 *Financial arrangements for the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference*. The agreed outcome was identical to that agreed in April 2006 – namely to record that the estimated costs had been approved by the Meeting of States Parties on 10 December 2010.

The Preparatory Committee completed its closed sessions early on the afternoon of Thursday 14 April and then moved into open session to consider Agenda item 9 *Other business* when a number of statements were made by States Parties.

Cuba spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties, saying that *The Group would like to reiterate its deep concern at the potential use and/or threats of use of biological agents and toxins as an instrument of war or terror. In light of this, the Group feels that there is greater necessity and urgency to the States Parties of the BWC to work towards the strengthening and improving the effectiveness and implementation of this Convention so that together we can fully address this concern. The high importance the Group attaches to an effective and verifiable BWC, implemented in a comprehensive manner, cannot be overemphasized. ... In this regard the group highlighted the urgency of starting multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non discriminatory legally binding instrument, for strengthening all the articles of the Convention. The statement went on to say The Group further recognizes the particular importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol and the universal adherence to the convention. We also reiterate our call to promote international cooperation for peaceful purposes, including scientific and technical exchanges, in accordance with Article X of the Convention. The statement concluded by saying that The next Review Conference would be also an excellent opportunity to make a decision on devising a detailed procedure to facilitate the implementation of the obligations under Article VII.*

Chile then spoke, saying *We believe it is important to provide guidance to State Parties in accordance with the requirements of assistance and exchange information on applications, offers and cooperation activities under Article X. The statement went on to add that Secondly, the Review Conference should pursue the evaluation of the benefits that exist in endowing the Convention with a verification regime. Certainly we should further discuss the multilateral negotiation of a protocol aimed at strengthening the Convention, but we must also take practical steps in the scope of Confidence-Building Measures. The statement continued Thirdly, we should assess ways to improve the productivity of intersessional work. It is clear that the Annual Meetings of the States Parties should have a guiding theme. But one might wonder if the Review Conference could allow the Annual Meetings of State Parties to take some concrete and practical decisions, such as the adoption of Confidence-Building Measures, the creation of Committees or thematic Working Groups, without having to wait for the Review Conferences. Naturally these decisions must be consistent with the mandate of the Review Conferences. Furthermore, it added that The creation of Committees or Groups, voluntary and open, could contribute to intersessional work on important matters for the Convention.*

India then spoke, saying *we reiterate our commitment to the full implementation of the BTWC and its univers-*

alization. States Parties must ensure that their commitments and obligations under the Convention are fully and effectively implemented. The Seventh Review Conference will be an important opportunity to review the operation of the preamble and the provisions of the Convention. It will also give us the opportunity to discuss and agree on measures that would strengthen the Convention and ensure its full implementation. This is necessary in view of the new challenges to international peace and security emanating from proliferation trends, including the threat posed by terrorists or other non-state actors seeking access to biological agents or toxins for terrorist purposes. The Review Conference should send a clear signal of the collective determination of all States Parties to address these common challenges. The statement continued A central element of the operation of the Convention is compliance by all State parties with their obligations under the Convention. This is a multilateral treaty. Verification of compliance is critically important for States parties to be collectively reassured that the provisions of the Convention are being realized. In this context, India would like to reiterate its support for the objective of a multilaterally agreed mechanism for verification of compliance that can provide the assurance of observance of their legal obligations by states parties and act as a deterrent against non-compliance. In addition, India said that although CBMs are an important transparency measure We believe CBMs are not an alternative to an effective mechanism for verification of compliance. CBMs are not declarations and cannot be treated as such for assessing non-compliance. In regard to developments in science and technology, India said that there is an imperative need for the Review Conference to agree on a mechanism for reviewing such developments in a focussed and continuous manner. In regard to Article X, the statement said that India stresses the importance of full and effective implementation of Article X of the Convention. The BTWC State Parties must facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and technology related to the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes consistent with their obligations under the Convention. We believe that strengthened implementation of Article III would ensure that the cooperation envisaged under Article X is not abused. A note of caution was sounded in regard to the intersessional process as India said that The Review Conference will provide an opportunity for us to look back at the last inter-sessional process and look to the future operation of the Convention. We would underline that the Convention itself does not provide for an inter-sessional process.

Indonesia then spoke on behalf of Indonesia and Norway to introduce a paper entitled *International Workshop on Developing Practical Proposals for the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention: a co-chairs' summary* which had been submitted by Indonesia, Norway and the Implementation Support Unit as BWC/CONF.VII/PC/INF.5. This paper described the outcome of the workshop held the previous weekend, 8-10 April 2011, in Montreux (See also *HSP Special Report from Montreux, Review no. 34, (May 2011)*). The conclusions – *preparing for a successful Review Conference* – from INF.5 state that:

States Parties were advised to prepare for success not failure. Participants discussed the need to establish markers for success in advance of the Review Conference. It was suggested that the Review Conference should not settle for the lowest common denominator but that States Parties should work to identify areas where action could be taken and that will make a real difference to international peace and security.

The workshop heard guidance on how to achieve a successful outcome, including the importance of:

- *Starting early – it was necessary to engage actors that could influence discussions and outcomes;*
- *Listening intently – to understand the positions and perspectives that drive these actors;*
- *Building interpersonal chemistry amongst negotiators – conferences flounder most commonly not because of difference between national positions but because of mismanaged relationships;*
- *Working with all stakeholders – States Parties, through their missions and in capitals, as well as the wider community, NGOs, industry and scientists;*
- *Building bridges between groups of like minded countries and coalitions – to encourage stakeholders to move into a shared space.*

Cuba then made a national statement, saying that *strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention will be essential to protect the environment and preserve the biodiversity in our planet. The draft Protocol aimed at strengthening the Convention, which was the target of negotiations some years ago, included measures proposed to protect the environment in the implementation of the Convention. The international community should not give up the achievement of this goal. The statement continued We reiterate that the only way to strengthen and improve the Biological Weapons Convention is through the negotiation and adoption of a legally-binding Protocol filling the gaps of that instrument. Such a Protocol should include the basic pillars of the Convention, such as a non-discriminatory verification regime and assistance and cooperation matters in accordance with the proposals made by the Group of Non-Aligned Movement some years ago.*

Mexico then spoke noting the importance of ensuring that all proposals for the Review Conference should be reviewed by all stakeholders.

The **Philippines** then made an announcement about a superweek that they were organizing in June, and about an ASEAN Regional Forum workshop covering the Convention in its totality that they are planning for September 2011.

Pakistan then spoke, highlighting the relevance to the Convention of the scientific cooperation among Islamic states enabled by the COMSTECH Secretariat in Islamabad, which assists the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

South Korea started by paying tribute to the Implementation Support Unit and saying that South Korea hoped they will

continue to play an active role in promoting the implementation and universality of the Convention and in facilitating the exchange and cooperation among States Parties. The statement went on to say The advancement of biotechnology and life sciences has resulted in the widespread availability of dual-use technology. This has rendered it increasingly difficult to make a clear distinction between the peaceful use of biological material permitted in the BWC and the military use prohibited by the Convention. There is, indeed, a greater risk that potential proliferators will take advantage of these loopholes. Furthermore, the risk that terrorists may acquire biological material adds a new dimension to such threats. This requires that the BWC keep abreast of these developments to counter effectively the new emerging threats. Korea then said that The BWC now faces anew occasion to revitalize itself through an overall review at the upcoming 7th Review Conference. Many countries have been making great efforts to strengthen the BWC. We fully appreciate the valuable ideas they have put forward. We also strongly support the idea of continuing the inter-sessional meeting process and dealing with both issues that have already been discussed and new issues. In addition, we are of the opinion that the adoption of the Action Plan for universality and national implementation may be one possible means to shore up the Convention. The statement then went on to outline the way in which Korea has been assisting developing countries in the field of infectious diseases and concluded by outlining the steps taken by Korea to strengthen their counter-terrorism capacity in preparation for the G-20 summit held in Seoul in November 2010.

The **United States** said that *The Seventh Review Conference should consolidate and build on efforts since the last RevCon and focus on concrete actions to reduce the threat of disease as a weapon. It then went on to say that The BWC provides the premier forum for members of the security, health, scientific and law enforcement communities to come together to better understand and address biological threats. The RevCon can decisively direct this forum to pursue three critical objectives:*

- *Promoting confidence in effective BWC implementation and compliance*
- *Preventing bioterrorism; and*
- *Building global capacity to combat infectious disease.*

It then pointed out that several important issues will require action at the RevCon:

- *We need to establish a Mechanism for Identifying and Addressing the Impact of Advances in Science and Technology – Ensuring States Parties' awareness of innovations in the life sciences and their implications for the BWC is essential to addressing 21st century challenges.*
- *We should work to update and strengthen the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) – Last revised in 1991, the CBM forms need to be updated to increase the relevance of State Parties' submissions to build confidence in compliance. It is likely that a combination of RevCon action and continued work in the next*

intersessional period will be required.

- *Identify practical steps to achieve our shared goal of Universality.*
- *We should ensure the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) is resourced in proportion to its future workload. Although any expansion of the ISU staff or resources must be tied to specific tasks that will be agreed upon at the RevCon, we are prepared in principle to support a modest expansion.*
- *We must continue and expand our efforts to involve industry and academia - The United States will expand its efforts to heighten awareness about scientific and technical advances and dual-use technology that raise concern. Possible areas to explore are programs to bring together academic, industry, and government scientists to discuss life sciences and security challenges, and involve industry in development of technologies to enhance transparency and avoid misuse of biological activities.*

The statement then went on to identify four priority topics for intersessional work as being:

- *Promoting confidence in States Parties' compliance with Article I and other obligations;*
- *Strengthening national implementation of the BWC, including oversight of relevant activities and the identification and promotion of specific risk-management practices;*
- *Strengthening and promoting outreach, education, and awareness to and of those engaged in the life sciences to reinforce strong norms of responsible, ethical, and safety- and security-conscious behavior;*
- *Building international capacity to detect and respond effectively to infectious disease outbreaks, particularly those of suspicious origin. The assistance provisions of Article VII are inherently limited by the requirement for a Security Council determination before they are triggered; a pragmatic approach to achieving the underlying goal of Article VII is to strengthen national detection and response capabilities and work to enhance international coordination in the event of a suspicious outbreak.*

The statement concluded by reiterating that the BWC should provide *the premier forum for members of the security, health, scientific and law enforcement communities to come together to address biological threats.*

Nigeria said that they looked forward to an open and inclusive Review Conference in December 2011.

Kenya spoke, noting that it was close to concluding its biosecurity policy which should be presented to parliament this year, and announcing that Kenya would be hosting a regional universality workshop this year.

Germany made a statement referring to the draft paper on Confidence-Building Measures that had been prepared by Germany, Norway and Switzerland and released at the lunch-time session on Thursday 14 April 2011. This is intended to

enable the Review Conference to reach agreement in December 2011 on streamlining the existing CBMs, in order to increase the number of annual submissions and improve their quality.

Pakistan in a second intervention said that, in regard to the forthcoming evaluation of the ISU and decision on its future at the Review Conference, Pakistan requested that a consolidated report on the whole five years of the ISU be made available well in advance, to assist decision-making at the Review Conference.

Australia spoke to highlight the value of the Montreux workshop held on the preceding weekend of 8 – 10 April 2011 and thanked Indonesia, Norway and the ISU for organising it.

France spoke to stress the value of the work already done by the ISU and the importance of its continuation after the Seventh Review Conference.

After these statements, the Preparatory Committee then moved on to consider Agenda item 8 *The Report of the Preparatory Committee to the Review Conference*. This was circulated as BWC/CONF.VII/PC/CRP.1 dated 14 April 2011 and was adopted, as orally amended, by the Preparatory Committee at its final meeting in the late afternoon of Thursday 14 April 2011. The final version of the Report of the Preparatory Committee is BWC/CONF.VII/PC.2 dated 26 April 2011. During the course of this a query by Pakistan as to whether a consolidated report of the activities of the ISU since its creation ought to be added to the list of background information papers, was answered by the Chairman advising that although not a background information paper there would be a consolidated report by the ISU on its activities.

The Chairman then made a closing statement. He noted that the Preparatory Committee had concluded its business in a very efficient fashion, a full day ahead of schedule. He said that it had taken all the necessary decisions, and paved the way for a full and comprehensive review of the Biological Weapons Convention in December. He thanked all the States Parties for the part they had played in this result. *We have worked in a collegial, constructive and highly-focused way, keeping our overall goal in sight, and resolving our differences through careful listening, respectful dialogue, and flexible approaches.*

He continued *I think therefore we have made an excellent start to the formal review process. But it is only the beginning. With the formal procedural framework now securely in place, we must turn our attention to substance, to developing practical proposals, to bridging differences and building consensus. I cannot let you escape without once again reminding you of my overarching motto of ambitious realism. I am confident that if we continue in the way we have begun at this Preparatory Committee, we will succeed in achieving a strong and wide-ranging consensus outcome at the Review Conference that significantly strengthens the Convention and genuinely reduces the threats posed to international security by biological weapons.*[emphasis in original]

Reflections

Group statements were made by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by Hungary on behalf of the European Union and, in a welcome innovation, by Indonesia on behalf of the ASEAN Member States Parties (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam) and the ASEAN Signatory State (Myanmar). It is regretted that there were no group statements on behalf of the JACKSNNZ group (Japan, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand) – although the Information paper on behalf of JACKSNNZ and Sweden is greatly welcomed – or on behalf of the Latin American States. However, it is to be hoped that all of these groups will make statements at the start of the Review Conference in December 2011, as such statements help greatly in moving towards consensus.

The atmosphere at the Preparatory Committee Meeting in preparation for the Seventh Review Conference was largely positive. Many of the group statements and individual statements by States Parties looked forward to a positive outcome to the Seventh Review Conference, and outlined topics – notably, the advances in science and technology, the CBM process, the continuation and strengthening of the ISU, cooperation and assistance under Article X, and achievement of universality – that are expected to be addressed at the Seventh Review Conference. There was ready agreement on a three-week duration for the Review Conference from 5 to 22 December 2011. Although there were divergences on the wording of draft Agenda item 11, a successful compromise was found. There was a significant step forward in the agreement to request eight background documents, two more than for the Sixth Review Conference in 2006. The new background document showing the common understandings reached by the Meetings of States Parties during the intersessional programme held from 2007 to 2010 is welcomed as this should facilitate the consideration by the Seventh Review Conference of the work and outcome of these meetings and clarify what decisions should be taken on any further action. The second new background document on the implementation of Article X, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties, including information submitted pursuant to paragraph 54 of the Final Declaration of the Sixth Review Conference, is also welcomed as it will help to inform consideration by the Seventh Review Conference on whether a specific mechanism is needed to implement Article X.

The Chairman's initiative to enable other stakeholders in the Convention to be present during the Committee of the Whole at the Seventh Review Conference was welcomed, building on the advantages provided by their presence during the intersessional process which gives all stakeholders a greater appreciation of the concerns of the States Parties. It is to be hoped that the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole will enable these other stakeholders to be present during meetings of his Committee at the Seventh Review Conference.

There was acceptance in several statements of the advantages of moving to a situation in which the annual Meetings of States Parties are authorized to take concrete and practical decisions, and this acceptance is welcomed – after all, the Meetings of States Parties have taken decisions:

for example at MSP/2010, on the dates of the Preparatory Committee and of the Seventh Review Conference as well as on the budget. And, in the intersessional process each Meeting of States Parties has decided who shall be the Chairman for the following year's meetings.

Some of the statements referred to the desirability of resuming negotiations on a legally binding instrument to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention. Whilst the emphasis on working to *strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention* is greatly to be welcomed, the emphasis on resumption of negotiations for a legally-binding instrument appears outdated: by the Review Conference in 2011, it will be a decade since those negotiations ceased and over two decades since the process began at the Third Review Conference in 1991. A great deal has changed in the world since 1991 and it would be far better for the Seventh Review Conference to agree to establish a working group to look ahead to what sort of regime is appropriate, achievable and desirable for the Convention a decade hence in 2021. The aim should indeed be to focus on how best to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the comprehensive implementation of the Convention but looking to the future. Looking back to the negotiations of a legally binding instrument is unlikely to attract consensus and will be a misuse of the goodwill that has been successfully generated during the intersessional process of the past decade. However, as was pointed out in the concluding remarks at the Montreux workshop immediately before the Preparatory Committee meeting, the importance of listening carefully to the statements made (as positions do change) is evident in regard to the topic of a legally-binding instrument. Thus the statement made by Cuba on behalf of the NAM on Wednesday 13 April said that *The Group believes that the RevCon provides a good opportunity to discuss the **resumption** of multilateral negotiations on a legally binding instrument to comprehensively strengthen the Convention.* [emphasis added] whilst the statement made by Cuba on behalf of the NAM on Thursday 14 April said *In this regard the group highlighted the urgency of **starting** multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non discriminatory legally binding instrument, for strengthening all the articles of the Convention.* [emphasis added] The change between these two statements is to be welcomed as the later one is forward-looking.

States Parties are urged to approach the Seventh Review Conference with a sense of seeing what can be agreed and to avoid coming with set views that certain things cannot be done for this or that reason. This is not a time for taking refuge in past statements and positions but rather to listen carefully to the concerns of different States Parties and to see how far consensus can enable the States Parties collectively to move towards their common goal of strengthening the Convention.

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