

**Speaking Notes of Ambassador Masood Khan, President-designate
of the Sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons
Convention**

Group Meetings

11-22 September 2006

Western Group: 08:45-09:30, Monday 11 September, Room VIII

Eastern European Group: 08:45-09:30, Thursday 14 September, Room XXV

Group of NAM and Other States: 14:50-15:30, Friday 22 September, Room H3

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to the members of your group. I know that many of you are busy with the conclusion of the CD report and other commitments, so I do appreciate your making the time for this meeting. I thought it would be timely to consult the groups at this stage, since many delegations have been working hard on a variety of papers and proposals for the Review Conference, many of which I believe will be circulated in the next week or so. I also wanted to take the chance to talk to you before delegations depart for the First Committee in New York.

I also sincerely thank you all for your cooperation and support during the Preparatory Committee held in April. Thanks to the constructive and resourceful spirit displayed by States Parties at that meeting, the Preparatory Committee was a success. We met all the objectives we had set ourselves. We put in place the administrative and procedural machinery necessary to allow the Sixth Review Conference to do a thorough and comprehensive job of reviewing the Convention, to ensure that it remains an effective barrier against the threats posed by biological weapons. We have a provisional agenda that will allow us to focus on all the issues important to States Parties, and no delegation need feel that it will not be able to raise and discuss those issues which concern it.

Now that the procedural foundations are in place, it is time to consider the substance. I am very pleased that so many delegations have been working hard to prepare papers for the Conference. I am also happy that many of these papers will soon be circulated for discussion. Time is of the essence in our preparations, and if we are to make efficient use of the three short weeks we have for the Conference, it is vital that States Parties should prepare and consult as far in advance as possible. I would encourage all those who are developing papers to circulate them widely, and indeed to post them on DDA's

new BWC website, where they can easily be accessed. Once the papers are in circulation, I would also encourage delegations to consult others who may have similar papers, to explore the possibility of merging several similar ideas into unified, widely-supported proposals. And the more closely you can keep me informed of your activities, the better I will be able to support them.

Let me turn now to the outcome of the Review Conference. I know this is a matter of great interest to all delegations. There are various options before us, but we need not commit ourselves to any particular model. While keeping our options open, we should make the most of the flexibility offered by the provisional agenda to work towards a substantive outcome. We can undertake an article-by-article approach, combined with a more thematic consideration of the issues which by their very nature cut across several articles of the Convention.

With this in mind, allow me to offer the following very preliminary thoughts on the likely outcome.

First, we should aim for a concise document that will not only be useful to States Parties as a record of their understandings and commitments in the fight against biological weapons, but will communicate these effectively to the media, the scientific community, industry, and the general public.

Second, it will be important to recapture and reaffirm, very briefly, core elements of the Convention and understandings reached by States Parties. Because of the phenomenal advances in the life sciences, it will be both prudent and desirable to state that the Convention applies to all relevant scientific and technological developments. It would also be useful to recall the understanding that the Convention implicitly prohibits the *use* of BW. The background document prepared by the Secretariat on the additional understandings and agreements reached by previous review conferences (available in all languages as BWC/CONF.VI/INF.1) will be a useful tool in distilling these core understandings.

Third, the final declaration will have to reflect in some way our deliberations and agreements on a number of specific issues that have either been passed to us by the Fifth Review Conference, or the fresh proposals of the States Parties, of course subject to consensus.

During my consultations held so far, I have heard delegations expressing interest in the following elements:

- Article by article review.
- Review of action on the five topics mandated by the Fifth Review Conference for consideration by the 2003-2005 meetings: national

- implementation; security and oversight of pathogens; capabilities for responding to and investigating alleged use of BW; mechanisms for disease surveillance and response; codes of conduct for scientists.
- Preview of and possible decisions on an intersessional calendar of meetings and activities on agreed topics for 2007-2010.
 - Confidence-building Measures (CBMs).
 - Universalisation of the Convention.
 - New scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention.
 - Scientific and technological cooperation and exchanges.
 - Bioterrorism
 - Compliance and verification.
 - Coordination with other organizations and activities (such as WHO, SCR 1540, Interpol, FAO, OIE, ICRC, etc).
 - Implementation support arrangements for the Convention, inter alia, to run the intersessional process.

The subjects listed above are indicative. The States Parties will decide what areas they want to focus on.

As for the organization and conduct of the Conference itself, I will be consulting widely on this, and will be relying heavily on the advice and support of my colleagues in the PrepCom Bureau, Ambassador Doru Costea of Romania and Mr. Knut Langeland of Norway, who will become, respectively, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole and Chairman of the Drafting Committee.

For the inaugural session on November 20, I have invited Mr. Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, and Madame Micheline Calmy-Rey, Vice President of the Swiss Federation. We have not received any confirmations from them yet. Under-Secretary-General Tanaka has said that he would join us in Geneva. I have also invited the Heads of WHO, OIE, FAO, OPCW, Interpol, UNESCO and the ICRC to encourage participation of their organizations in the Sixth Review Conference.

I am conscious of the need to be very efficient in the use of our time. With this in mind, I am hoping to conclude the General Debate within two days - one and a half days, to be more precise. To achieve that objective, I need the cooperation and skill of all delegations. *Skill*, because sharp, concise and focused statements, delivered in 5 to 7 minutes, will help us start our negotiations early and set the stage for a productive outcome.

Following my consultations, I will develop a provisional programme of work for the Conference. Such a programme will, however, be only indicative. It will be made fully responsive to the need to deal effectively with all the issues and to help develop a comprehensive, strong and positive consensus outcome.

I remain ready, as always, to hear your views and feedback, now or later, oral or written. I am available in Geneva until 28 September, after which I will be in New York for the First Committee. I am happy to hold consultations on either side of the Atlantic. The Secretariat is available to help you with any practical matters, and I would like to remind you of the new website, www.unog.ch/bwc, which contains many useful resources to help you prepare for the Conference.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I remain upbeat and optimistic. States Parties are putting a great deal of thought and effort into their preparations. This zeal and determination, coupled with the creative approach displayed by all at the Preparatory Committee, can only be a good sign. Challenges remain, but I am confident that they can be overcome, and that the Sixth Review Conference will be able to make a genuine and lasting contribution to keeping the world free of biological weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman
