

**AD HOC GROUP 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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Working paper submitted by Australia

Declaration

of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on the Negotiation Towards Conclusion of the Protocol to Strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention

1. The Ministers view with deep concern the threat to global and regional security posed by biological weapons. They agree on the importance of strong and urgent international action to ensure the strengthening of the ban on biological weapons. The Ministers welcome Australia's initiative to convene this informal meeting of Ministers under the chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of New Zealand to assist in achieving these goals.
2. The Ministers affirm their strong support for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the implementation of the Convention. The Ministers underline the political and security imperatives of concluding, as a matter of priority, a protocol to the Convention. They recognize the gravity of the work of the Ad Hoc Group and the pressing need for further progress in that work, and they warmly welcome the progress achieved to date. The Ministers stress the importance of fulfilling all aspects of the Ad Hoc Group mandate, recognizing its scope and significance. They strongly believe that benefits in terms of security and development will accrue to all States Parties to the protocol.
3. The Ministers are determined to see this essential negotiation brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible. They give their full support to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group, including on securing necessary time for the Ad Hoc Group to complete its work. The Ministers call on all States Parties to accelerate the negotiations, and to redouble their efforts within the Ad Hoc Group to formulate an efficient, cost-effective and practical regime and seek early resolution of the outstanding issues through renewed flexibility in order to complete the protocol on the basis of consensus at the earliest possible date.
4. The Ministers highlight the value of close dialogue and cooperation with industry in order to enable industry perspectives to contribute to the development of a credible and effective protocol.

5. The Ministers reiterate the importance of strong and urgent action to eliminate the threat of biological weapons. They are committed to sustaining high level political support for the negotiations, including, after consultation among all States Parties to the Convention, through convening a high level meeting at the most appropriate time during the negotiating process in 1999, open to all States Parties to the Convention, in support of the work of the Ad Hoc Group.

23 September 1998
NEW YORK

**Informal Ministerial Meeting on the Negotiation Towards Conclusion of
the Protocol to Strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention**

New York, 23 September 1998

Co-sponsors of the Declaration

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Bangladesh	New Zealand
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Brazil	Peru
Bulgaria	Philippines
Canada	Poland
Chile	Portugal
China	Republic of Korea
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Fiji	Slovakia
Finland	Slovenia
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Germany	South Africa
Greece	Spain
Hungary	Sweden
Indonesia	Switzerland
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Ireland	Tonga
Italy	Turkey
Japan	Ukraine
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