

## FOREWORD

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) of 1972 and its successive Review Conferences have established an international norm prohibiting completely the development, production, stockpiling and acquisition of biological or toxin weapons and embracing all developments in microbiology, genetic engineering and biotechnology. However, since the last Review Conference and particularly over the last few months following the anthrax attacks in the United States, there has been unsurpassed anxiety and concern about the danger worldwide from the deliberate use of disease as a means of attacking humans, animals or plants. Key developments over the past five years include:

- \* The entry into force on 29 April 1997 of the Chemical Weapons Convention which currently has 143 States Parties. The implementation of the verification provisions of the CWC have significantly increased transparency and built confidence between the States Parties.
- \* Progress towards a legally-binding instrument to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the BTWC has been halted by reservations on the part of the US that came to a head on 25 July 2001 and the unwillingness of the other States Parties to go ahead without US participation.
- \* The anthrax attacks in the United States following the 11 September 2001 atrocities have raised public concern, anxiety and awareness of the dangers of biological weapons to unprecedented levels worldwide.

States Parties need to seize the opportunity at this Review Conference to reaffirm the complete prohibition of biological weapons and to develop further extended understandings for this prohibition regime underpinned by the BTWC. States Parties need to continue their efforts *to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation* of the Convention through a legally-binding instrument. They must rise above the setbacks of July/August and welcome the recent identification by the United States of measures to strengthen the Convention. These and other proposals need to be explored and elaborated in order to develop a package of legally-binding measures that attracts the support of all States Parties -- large and small, developed and developing.

The States Parties must live up to the international expectations that they will explore every avenue and go the extra mile to make the world a safer place for everyone.

This Briefing Book is intended to provide quality information to States Parties about the key issues relevant to each Article of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in a manner which will aid and inform their participation in the Fifth Review Conference to be held in Geneva on 19 November to 7 December 2001. The Department of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford and the individual authors are to be commended for the initiative they have taken in preparing this comprehensive and informative Briefing Package.

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