

# **STRENGTHENING THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION: KEY POINTS FOR THE SIXTH REVIEW CONFERENCE**

## **FOREWORD**

The States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) are holding the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention from 20 November to 8 December 2006.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is a very important convention. International security depends on its continued faithful implementation. It is the third critical pillar of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The BTWC regime has several successes to its credit. We need to work hard to make it more effective and more successful. In this context, we need to be fully responsive to the contemporary trends, threats, challenges and opportunities. As we have all observed during the period 2003 to 2005, civil society, industry, and international organisations have taken keen interest in the work under the BTWC. The advances in life sciences and the growing role of the biotechnology industry in the international economy make our work in preparing for the Sixth Review Conference so relevant and vital.

There is a wide range of important and challenging substantive issues which lie before the States Parties and which will have to be dealt with at the Review Conference. I have stressed to the States Parties that we need to make the best use of time and resources between now and the beginning of the Review Conference to ensure that once the conference is underway, it can deal efficiently and comprehensively with every issue that needs attention.

As President-Designate I am very encouraged by the amount of thinking and preparation which is already taking place – among delegations and also by academics and non-governmental organisations.

We have a challenging task ahead. I have found so far an encouraging willingness to explore solutions, to build on the successes of the BTWC regime, and to address deficits.

I am confident that with creativity, flexibility and resilience we will succeed in finding mutually acceptable paths to further strengthen the BTWC regime. I am confident that we shall succeed.

I have encouraged everyone – both States Parties and those in academia and the NGOs – to liberally provide their inputs to facilitate our preparations for the Review Conference. I am especially keen to receive detailed proposals for how the various important and challenging substantive issues can be addressed at the Review Conference.

I thank the Department of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford and commend the individual authors for the initiative they have taken in preparing this detailed and informative Briefing Book. The compilation provides information on a wide range of issues relevant to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in a manner that will inform the States Parties' preparation for the Sixth Review Conference.

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