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## Biological Weapons Convention Review Process

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Per Article XII of the BWC, a conference was mandated to occur within five years of its entry into force to review its operation, relevant scientific and technological developments, as well as progress towards the negotiation of a convention to prohibit the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. This First Review Conference took place in Geneva in March of 1980. The Second Review Conference took place in 1986, and has been convened every five years ever since. The Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention will be held at the United Nations Office in Geneva from 5 to 22 December 2011.

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### UNITED STATES PRIORITIES FOR THE SEVENTH BTWC REVIEW CONFERENCE

#### Proposal on Health/Security Interface

##### **Goals:**

- Identify and address - through recommendations, guidelines, and information-sharing arrangements - specific impediments to prompt, effective international response to disease outbreaks that are insufficiently addressed in other fora.
- Energize countries to increase their preparedness (surveillance, reporting, and response) for bioterrorism or infectious disease outbreaks, in line with the 2005 International Health Regulations, the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases, and other relevant international initiatives.

##### **Elements:**

- Establish an open-ended working group to meet annually on the topic of combating infectious disease outbreaks, particularly those of suspicious origin. The working group's mandate would be to promote common understandings and effective action on international cooperation and assistance in detecting, reporting, and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks; to identify and address impediments to prompt, effective international response; to develop, if needed, appropriate metrics to evaluate progress; and to report through the

annual Meeting of States Parties (MSP) to the Eighth Review Conference in 2016 on next steps.

### **Proposal on National Implementation**

#### **Goals:**

- Strengthen national implementation: 1) through efforts to promulgate and standardize approaches that include appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks, enforcement, pathogen safety and security measures, oversight of dual-use research of concern, and outreach to stakeholders; and 2) by facilitating relevant assistance.
- Increase awareness/understanding of the level of BTWC implementation in individual States Parties through improved reporting, such as through revised Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) that improve the utility of, and participation in, the CBMs.

#### **Elements:**

- Establish an open-ended working group to meet annually with a mandate to strengthen national implementation of BTWC obligations through improved transparency of the status of implementation by States Parties and the identification of specific measures and practices that States Parties should consider as possible means to: 1) fulfill their obligations; 2) explore options for strengthening the BTWC confidence building regime by improving both the utility of, and participation in, the process; and 3) consider options for addressing doubts and ambiguities. The Working Group would submit reports for appropriate action by the MSP and through the MSP to the Eighth Review Conference on next steps.

### **Proposal on Science and Technology**

#### **Goals:**

- Strengthen oversight measures within the scientific community for dual-use research of potential concern, while limiting the impact on science.
- Strengthen the review process for developments in science and technology to ensure a more thorough, structured appraisal of scientific and technological developments, taking into account both the risks and benefits of such developments.

#### **Elements:**

- Establish an open-ended working group on science and technology to meet annually, with a mandate to: 1) identify best practices for supporting the ongoing development of a culture of responsibility and related oversight within the life sciences community, including in the area of education; and 2) develop recommendations for the Eighth Review Conference in response to developments in science and technology, on the basis of national reports and inputs from an Inter-Academy Panel (IAP) or other international scientific bodies.
- Working group should seek the active engagement of nongovernmental entities, including industry, and establish relationship between the BTWC and the Inter-Academy Panel or a similar body to provide scientific input.

- Working group should report, through the MSP, to the Eighth Review Conference on developments in science and technology and their implications and recommended next steps.

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