

## **Biological Weapons Convention: Regional Group Meetings November 2014**

### **Chairman's Speaking Notes**

*Eastern European Group: 11.00-11:45, Friday 7 November 2014, room IX*

*Western Group: 15.00- 15:45, Friday 7 November 2014, room IX*

*Group of NAM and Other States: 16:30-17:15, 11 November 2014, room XXII*

- I extend my appreciation to the Regional Coordinator for convening this meeting and to all Delegates for the support in our common work this year. Thanks to an excellent cooperation we held a very rich and productive Meeting of Experts in August on the three standing agenda items and the biennial topic. A compilation of the proposals and inputs put forward during the Meeting of Experts is available in an annex to the Report of the Meeting of Experts contained in BWC/MSP/2013/MX/3 (available on the ISU website in six UN languages).
- I am also delighted to be accompanied today by Vice-Chair Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia and by Mr. Dávid Puztai, representing Vice-Chair Ambassador György Molnár of Hungary, who, as you know, has replaced Ms. Judit Körömi. Ambassador Molnár is the Special Representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non Proliferation. His election has been approved by States Parties through silence procedure and I would like to thank you for your endorsement of this excellent candidature. I am looking forward to collaborating with Ambassador Molnár and I thank Ms. Körömi for her service.
- The ISU is represented today by Ms Ngoc Phuong van der Blij and I ask you to welcome also Dr. Piers Millet, who will again be part of the Chair's team.

### **Structure of the current meeting**

- Let me structure my presentation today in three parts:
  1. First, I would like to address personnel and staffing matters with you. Let me briefly touch upon the nomination of the new Chief of the ISU and refer to other ISU staffing related matters.
  2. Second, I will share with you progress made in the preparations for the MSP; and I will seek feedback from States Parties on these preparatory arrangements. I will also give the floor to the ISU for any administrative and logistical information. The floor will then be open again for your comments or questions.
  3. Finally, I will address the substantive part of our meeting, and the expected outcome of the Meeting of States Parties.

## **Part I**

### **ISU staffing related matters**

- *On the nomination of the new Chief of the ISU*

I have now been informed by UNODA of the successful conclusion of the recruitment process for the vacancy left by the departure of the former head of the ISU, Richard Lennane. The new head of the ISU will be Mr. Daniel Feakes, currently working as Strategy and Policy Advisor at the OPCW in The Hague. UNODA is confident that Mr. Daniel Feakes will be joining the ISU as soon as possible and I am looking forward to cooperate as closely as possible with him, hopefully already at the forthcoming MSP.

- *On other pending ISU staffing related matters*

As you know, the ISU is currently understaffed and this will continue to be the case at the time of the Meeting of States Parties. For this reason, in my letter dated October 7, I raised the question of short term temporary staff reinforcement for a total period of six months. Regarding this question, the silence procedure ended on 21 October, and I have not received any objection. Therefore, I have asked UNODA to move forward with the relevant arrangements in order to ensure an orderly conduct of the MSP and a satisfactory service of States Parties. I would like to thank you for your support which allowed me to find a quick temporary solution to the staffing problems of the ISU:

The other matter that I had raised in my letter concerns the grade level of the other two posts in the ISU, the vacant P3 position and the P2 post. The issue had been identified already at the 7<sup>th</sup> Review Conference, but no action was taken pending a review of these positions. This review has been performed and the UN has assessed that the duties and responsibilities of these posts reflect higher grade levels, respectively P4 and P3. That means that there is a discrepancy between the current duties and responsibilities of the staff and the grade levels of the posts. For the stability and sustainability of the ISU it would therefore seem recommended to upgrade both posts to the adequate levels, the more, as it would have been impossible to reconcile the job description in the vacancy announcement with the actual duty expectations. Upgrading the two posts will have a maximum estimated additional cost of US\$ 75,000 per year, but it is not expected to have an impact on the current cost estimates until the next Review Conference.

Again, bearing in mind the necessity to move forward as effectively as possible on this matter, while remaining as transparent as possible, I have again sought your endorsement through silence procedure, which ended on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> November. I am glad to announce that no objection has been raised and I have therefore invited UNODA to take the necessary steps to adapt the grade levels and to resume the recruitment process as soon as possible. Again, I would like to thank delegations for their support in this matter, which may facilitate the recruitment process for the ISU and contribute to the strengthening of the intersessional process.

[...]

## **Part II**

- In my most recent letter to States Parties, dated 7 October, I have further outlined my intentions with regard to the organization of the forthcoming Meeting of States Parties (MSP), in accordance with the practice of the two previous presidencies. I take it that you have all received this letter, along with the synthesis paper and the provisional programme of work and had the time to study it. For the sake of transparency, this communication can be downloaded from the BWC official website ([www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting](http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting)).

### **Agenda and programme of work**

- Let me first address procedural and other administrative matters.
- Attached to the letter dated was a draft of the provisional programme of work for the Meeting of States Parties. It is based on the one we adopted in 2013, but also updated to reflect the 2014 topical subject. And like in previous years, I have ensured that we maintain the balance between the various agenda items and the biennial topic.
- For its part, the provisional agenda is available on the BWC website.
- I trust these are acceptable to delegations, but would welcome any comments or reactions in this regard.
- In that context, I would like to add that, as it was done previously, I will be asking the two Vice-Chairs, Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia and Ambassador György Molnár of Hungary, to assist me in chairing sessions during the MSP.

## **Updates and submissions- ISU Background Paper update; sponsorship programme; CBMs; universalization**

I also take this opportunity to provide updates on several issues related to document submissions by the ISU, the sponsorship programme, confidence-building measures and universalization:

- Following the requests of States Parties, I have requested the ISU to prepare an addendum to the background paper on the role of international organizations in the provision of assistance relevant to Article VII; an advance copy of the paper is now available on the website of the BWC. ([www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting](http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting))
- I would also like to highlight that thanks to recent, generous offers by a number of States Parties; there will likely be some funds available to sponsor participation at the MSP. I take this opportunity to convey my appreciation to those among you who have been forthcoming in contributing to this important tool for our efforts to universalize the Convention and ensure broad participation of States Parties.
- I have been informed by the ISU that CBMs submissions have reached 68. It is very promising, and I am still hoping that we will be able to break the record of 71 submissions (set in 2010) by the end of the year. I would reiterate that a late submission is much better than no submission.
- With regards to universalization, let me inform you that I have conducted bilateral meetings with three States not party to the Convention, Andorra, Comoros, and Eritrea; as well as with three signatories: Haiti, Nepal, and the United Republic of Tanzania. These meetings were organized in New York, taking advantage of my participation at the First Committee. That gave me the opportunity to exchange views with these states on their intentions and current efforts to adhere to the Convention.
- In that context, I am also pleased to announce that Andorra and Myanmar are very close to joining the Convention. The ISU and I are maintaining close contact with these two countries and hope to have the pleasure to welcome one or both of them as State Parties at the MSP. Further details on universalization activities will be submitted to you in my Universalization Report in December.
- With regard to side events, I was delighted to see a lot of interest and that there are more demands on reserving slots than the number of lunch sessions available. For that reason, in several cases, it has not been possible to give those requesting side events their preferred slot. I thank side-events' organizers for their flexibility and understanding. In view of the number of side-events, there will certainly be, in some cases two side-events that will take place in parallel rooms as well as a number of breakfast side event.

In that context I may perhaps invite the ISU to convey to delegations any logistic and administrative information useful to delegations regarding the MSP:

(The ISU to speak briefly on these matters).

- I thank the ISU for these various elements. Before turning to the substantive preparation of the MSP, I would like to open the floor at this stage in case any delegation would like to address the different procedural and administrative aspects that we have just covered.

## **Part III**

### **Outcome of the MSP**

- Let me now turn to the substantive dimension of the MSP.
- I expect the Report of the Meeting of States Parties to closely resemble those adopted in 2012 and 2013. I anticipate, therefore, that the 2014 report would include both factual and substantive sections, and that it will have annexed to it my synthesis paper and a list of documents.

- The substantive elements of the report will likely cover both previously agreed elements and new common understandings. Our substantive output will need to preserve the balance between the standing agenda items and the biennial item, as provided for in the Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference.
- As I have communicated to you previously, I am also keen that we find a way to fully address the part of our mandate to promote effective action. I hope that we can find a way to capture this in the report of our meeting.
- Without straying from past precedent, I am also keen that we explore every opportunity to facilitate our work at the Meeting of States Parties.
- During my consultations, I have received requests from States Parties in each of the regional groups, that prior to gathering for the MSP we start to think about the possible substantive output of our meeting.
- I am keen to take action on these requests and to start working on language as soon as possible. As a result, I intend to provide to you, at an earlier than usual point in the year, the Chair's text which in the past has not been distributed until the middle of the Meeting of States Parties. It is my intention to convey this document to your missions and BWC National Points of Contact if possible already during the week of Monday 17 November.
- As in the past, the Chair's text will represent my approximation as to where consensus may be found on the issues we discussed at the Meeting of Experts.
- The Chair's text, as usual, will draw upon the material we heard in August, as refined in the annex to the Report of the Meeting of Experts, and developed in the synthesis paper, attached to my letter of 7 October. It is intended to help delegations to identify those elements they would wish to address during the MSP in December. The text will be further consolidated in the light of elements and proposals put forward at the MSP.
- The feedback I hope to hear today as we revisit my synthesis paper will be key in helping me to shape the Chair's text. I encourage you to be frank and comprehensive with your insights. Should you wish to flag additional elements between today and my issuing of Chair's text, you are welcome to do so in any manner you see fit.
- The Chair's text will also draw elements, in line with the texts tabled by my predecessors, from reports of past Meetings of States Parties. This has helped ensure our output has the necessary balance.
- My text, I hope, will be a useful starting point for our discussion and provide more time to reflect on possible content as well as fostering input from capital and relevant experts.
- In line with efforts to bring more voices to the table, providing you with these ideas earlier should help additional States Parties, to be in a better position, to play a more active role, in determining the outcome of our meeting. I hope that it will also provide us with more time to focus on promoting effective action at the Meeting of States Parties.

## Conclusion

- To sum up:
- I would like to hear any feedback you may have on my recent letter or on the proposed way forward.
- I am keen to continue to consult with delegations on an ongoing basis. I need to hear your opinions, this is your process and I see my job as helping you make the most of it.
- Finally, I look forward to working with you all to ensure an efficient, effective and productive Meeting of State Parties, with a view to making a valuable contribution to our intersessional programme.