

Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention

Briefing Paper No 1 (Third Series)

The Intersessional Period 2012 – 2015

July 2012

Series Editors

**Graham S. Pearson, Nicholas A. Sims,
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THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD 2012 – 2015

by Graham S. Pearson* and Nicholas A. Sims†

Introduction

1. The Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in December 2011 achieved a modest outcome¹. In this Briefing Paper we examine carefully what was achieved and what this outcome now makes possible in order to achieve the maximum benefits from this in the coming Intersessional Period as well as looking ahead to the Eighth Review Conference itself. We first consider the outcome of the Seventh Review Conference in regard to the Intersessional Period and then consider the developments that have happened in the subsequent six months up to June 2012. We conclude by noting the points arising from the Seventh Review Conference that are relevant in looking ahead to the Eighth Review Conference.

The Intersessional Period

2. The Seventh Review Conference *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations* section of the *Final Document*² agreed that the Intersessional Programme should have three Standing Agenda items – on cooperation and assistance, on developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention, and on strengthening national implementation. The agenda each year will also include two recurrent items carried forward from the last Intersessional Period: a report on progress towards universality, and the annual report of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

3. In addition, the Intersessional Programme is to consider two topics: one in 2012 and 2013 on *how to enable fuller participation in the CBMs* and one in 2014 and 2015 on *how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties*. As the annual Meeting of Experts and the annual Meeting of States Parties will last for only a week each – five working days, it is evident that States Parties will need to prepare appropriate substantive Working Papers and submit these well in advance of the annual Meetings.

4. It will be up to States Parties to address the key elements in these Working Papers – this is especially the case in regard to the Standing Agenda item on developments in science and technology as the mandate for this requires **seven** topics to be addressed not only in relation to any **new** development in science and technology that is brought up in any year but also in relation to the *topical scientific subject* to be considered **each** year. In 2012 there are three

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¹ Graham S. Pearson and Nicholas A. Sims, *The BTWC Seventh Review Conference: A Modest Outcome*, Bradford Review Conference Paper No. 31, University of Bradford, March 2012.

² United Nations, The Seventh Review Conference 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, Geneva, 5 - 22 December 2011, *Final Document*, BWC/CONF.VII/7, 13 January 2012. Available at <http://unog.ch/bwc> and at <http://www.opbw.org>

elements for the topical scientific subject to be addressed: *advances in enabling technologies, including high-throughput systems for sequencing, synthesizing and analyzing DNA; bioinformatics and computational tools; and systems biology*. As it was thought likely there would be no more than two half days to consider all of this at the Meeting of Experts and again at the Meeting of States Parties, the importance of well constructed and focused Working Papers is evident. They need to be on matters within the agenda selected for their significance for the BTWC. In addition, it was hoped that the Implementation Support Unit would, as during the previous Intersessional Period, provide one or more background papers. However, it should be recognized that because the Seventh Review Conference was unable to agree to any increase in the staffing of the Implementation Support Unit, their ability to prepare background papers will be limited.

5. There are also opportunities arising from the appointment of two Vice-chairs for the Intersessional Process which should facilitate progress. This is a distinct advance towards shared political responsibility on behalf of the States Parties as a whole. It will also enable the very concentrated workload to be shared – an especially important point given the allocation of only one week to the Meeting of Experts and one week to the Meeting of States Parties. It also represents a move towards a balanced political leadership, although it seems unlikely that the same individuals will be carrying out the same task throughout the Intersessional Period. Much of the value of this addition will depend on how efficiently and effectively the Chair and the two Vice-chairs divide up the work load – i.e. the agenda items – each year both among themselves and any Facilitators or Friends of the Chair they may appoint, for example on CBMs, to carry forward tasks ongoing from the Seventh Review Conference. There will be an opportunity to achieve valuable continuity – both through Vice-chairs becoming Chair in successive years and in taking up responsibility for items such as the promotion of universality and seeing this through into successive years.

6. Although there was no agreement to increase the resources and the staffing of the Implementation Support Unit, there was a welcome extension enabling States Parties in a position to do so to consider making voluntary contributions to the Unit to enhance its ability to carry out its mandated tasks. This will be especially important as the mandate of the ISU was extended by the decision that it shall, *in addition to the tasks mandated by the Sixth Review Conference*, perform the following tasks:

(a) implement the decision to establish and administer the database for assistance requests and offers, and facilitating the associated exchange of information among States Parties;

(b) support, as appropriate, the implementation by the States Parties of the decisions and recommendations of this Review Conference.

Given the outcome on resources at the Seventh Review Conference, it is expected that the annual reports of the ISU will include in future a section regarding its resources and their adequacy for carrying out the mandate.

Developments since the Seventh Review Conference

7. The Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference also reported that

At its ninth and final plenary meeting, on 22 December, the Conference decided that

the 2012 Meeting of Experts would be held in Geneva from 16 to 20 July 2012 and that the 2012 Meeting of States Parties would be held in Geneva from 10 to 14 December 2012. The Conference approved the nomination by the Group of the Non-aligned Movement and Other States of Ambassador Idriss Jazaïry (Algeria) as Chairman of the 2012 meetings.

8. Ambassador Idriss Jazaïry of Algeria wrote to the States Parties on 27 February 2012 to outline his plans for the Meeting of Experts and the Meeting of States Parties in 2012. He listed the three Standing Agenda items, the topic to be considered in 2012 and 2013 and recalled that the Meeting of States Parties would also consider, on an annual basis, progress towards universalization and the annual reports of the Implementation Support Unit. He pointed out that *Our first challenge is to develop a strategy and a draft programme of work that would allow us to deal effectively with this broad range of topics in the very limited time available at the Meeting of Experts ...* He also said that he looked forward to working with the Vice-Chairmen to be nominated by the Group of Eastern European States and the Western Group respectively.

9. Some two weeks later, on 15 March 2012, Ambassador Idriss Jazaïry of Algeria wrote to the States Parties to say that regrettably he would be unable to continue as Chairman of these meetings as his term as Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva would conclude on 31 March 2012. He proposed that in order to minimize any disruption to the preparations for the Meeting of Experts steps should be taken as had been done in similar circumstances in 2010. He said that he would ask the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States to endorse the nomination of his successor as Ambassador of Algeria, Ambassador Boujemâa Delmi.

10. On 23 March 2012, the Head of the Implementation Support Unit, Richard Lennane, wrote to the States Parties to say that the Group of the Non-aligned Movement and Other States had nominated the incoming Permanent Representative of Algeria, Ambassador Boujemâa Delmi, as Chairman of the Meeting of Experts and Meeting of States Parties, in place of Ambassador Jazaïry. He also advised that the Eastern European Group had nominated Dr. Cezary Lusinski of Poland as one Vice-chair and that the Western Group had nominated Ambassador Alexandre Fasel of Switzerland as the other Vice-chair. He asked for any objections to be received by Friday 30 March 2012. He added that *If no State Party has objected by this date, I will notify all States Parties that the appointments are officially confirmed with effect from Monday 2 April 2012.*

11. In the same letter, Richard Lennane also provided information about the assistance database:

Assistance database

The Seventh Review Conference decided to establish a database system to facilitate requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation among States Parties. The Conference invited States Parties to submit on a voluntary basis to the ISU any requirements, needs or offers for assistance, including in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information regarding the use of biological and toxin agents for peaceful purposes.

The ISU is finalizing the technical aspects of the database, and is ready to receive

*submissions from States Parties for inclusion. Please submit any requests or offers by e-mail to **bwc@unog.ch**. In the initial phase, the database will be made available only in the restricted area of the ISU website (**www.unog.ch/bwc/restricted**). Following review and discussion at the Meeting of Experts and Meeting of States Parties, consideration may be given to making part or all of the database available publicly.*

12. In a further letter of 13 April 2012, Richard Lennane wrote to States Parties to say that that, since no objection to the nominations had been received, *the following appointments are officially confirmed, with effect from 2 April 2012:*

Chairman: Ambassador Boujemâa Delmi (Algeria)

Vice-chair: Dr. Cezary Lusinski (Poland)

Vice-chair: Ambassador Alexandre Fasel (Switzerland)

13. Some six weeks later, on 1 June 2012, Ambassador Boujemâa Delmi wrote to States Parties to say that he intended to continue along the lines set out by his predecessor, Ambassador Jazaïry in his letter of 27 February. He said that his first priority was to prepare an agenda and programme of work for the meeting *that will allow us to deal effectively and efficiently with the large range of topics in the very limited time available*. In consultation with the Vice-chairs, and taking into account the views expressed by delegations over the past months, he had prepared a provisional agenda and programme of work. He said that:

The programme of work is where I have attempted to provide some guidance on how and when the various sub-items will be considered. You will note that not every sub-item is included: my proposal is to focus on the included sub-items this year, and then focus on the remaining ones next year. We could then perhaps repeat this alternation for 2014 and 2015, if it proves satisfactory. Some sub-items will by their nature need to be considered every year:

He stressed that the programme was only indicative and is *intended to help delegations prepare their participation, structure our discussions, and make the best use of our time to deal efficiently with the topics. States Parties will be free to raise any item on the agenda, and it is certainly not my intention to exclude any issue that any State Party considers important,*

14. The letter proposed a possible division of Standing Agenda sub-items as follows.

Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X

Every year:

(a) reports by States Parties on their implementation of Article X, and reports by the ISU on the operation of the database system to facilitate assistance requests and offers;

(d) ways and means to target and mobilize resources, including financial resources, to address gaps and needs for assistance and cooperation, in particular from developed to developing States Parties, and from international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders;

(g) coordination of cooperation with other relevant international and regional

organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.

2012 (and 2014):

(b) challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible means of overcoming these;

(f) capacity-building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity, and for detecting, reporting, and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation;

2013 (and 2015):

(c) a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of Article X taking into account all of its provisions, including facilitation of cooperation and assistance, including in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes, and identification of critical gaps and needs in these areas;

(e) education, training, exchange and twinning programmes and other means of developing human resources in the biological sciences and technology relevant to the implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries;

Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention

Every year:

(a) new science and technology developments that have potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention;

(b) new science and technology developments that have potential benefits for the Convention, including those of special relevance to disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation;

(f) science- and technology-related developments relevant to the activities of multilateral organizations such as the WHO, OIE, FAO, IPPC and OPCW;

(g) any other science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention.

2012:

Advances in enabling technologies, including high-throughput systems for sequencing, synthesizing and analyzing DNA; bioinformatics and computational tools; and systems biology.

(c) possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management, as appropriate, in research and development involving new science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention;

2013:

Advances in technologies for surveillance, detection, diagnosis and mitigation of infectious diseases, and similar occurrences caused by toxins in humans, animals and

plants.

(d) voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct by scientists, academia and industry;

(e) education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology.

2014:

Advances in the understanding of pathogenicity, virulence, toxicology, immunology and related issues

(c) possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management, as appropriate, in research and development involving new science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention;

2015:

Advances in production, dispersal and delivery technologies of biological agents and toxins.

(d) voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct by scientists, academia and industry;

(e) education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology.

Strengthening national implementation

Every year:

(b) ways and means to enhance national implementation, sharing best practices and experiences, including the voluntary exchange of information among States Parties on their national implementation, enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions;

2012 (and 2014)

(a) a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, especially Articles III and IV;

(c) regional and sub-regional cooperation that can assist national implementation of the Convention;

2013 (and 2015)

(d) national, regional and international measures to improve laboratory biosafety and security of pathogens and toxins;

(e) any potential further measures, as appropriate, relevant for implementation of the Convention.

15. Whilst the aim of spreading the topics across the Intersessional Period is recognized and appears reasonable for the Standing Agenda item on cooperation and assistance and for the Standing Agenda item on national implementation, the proposals for the Standing Agenda item on science and technology are more problematic as there is a fundamental difference in

regard to the Standing Agenda item on science and technology.

16. Careful examination of how this Standing Agenda item was created at the Seventh Review Conference shows that the intention was that the seven topics listed in paragraph 22 of *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations* of the *Final Document* of the Seventh Review Conference are to be addressed should there be a **new** science and technology development – and it is this that is addressed by the Standing Agenda item. Ambassador Delmi’s letter of 1 June 2012 noted that the Implementation Support Unit would be preparing two background papers related to the standing agenda item on science and technology: *one on advances in enabling technologies, and the other on the recent H5N1 avian influenza transmissibility research and the controversy surrounding its publication*. The H5N1 avian influenza transmissibility topic is a good example of a **new** development that should indeed be addressed by the Standing Agenda item on science and technology – and it would be illogical to argue that any implications from H5N1 relating to either

(d) voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct by scientists, academia and industry;

or

(e) education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology.

should not be addressed in 2012. It is urged that in order to deal efficiently with the topic, the inherent flexibility stressed by the Chairman’s letter ought to enable any of the seven topics listed in paragraph 22 to be addressed in regard to the H5N1 issue.

17. A similar point arises in regard to the topical scientific subject specified in paragraph 23 of *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations* of the *Final Document* that is to be addressed each year under the Standing Agenda item on science and technology. This topical scientific subject for 2012 is to be:

advances in enabling technologies, including high-throughput systems for sequencing, synthesizing and analyzing DNA; bioinformatics and computational tools; and systems biology (to be considered in 2012);

As with the implications of the H5N1 issue, it would also be illogical to argue that any implications from consideration of the topical scientific subject for 2012 relating to either

(d) voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct by scientists, academia and industry;

or

(e) education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology.

should not be addressed in 2012. It is again urged that in order to deal efficiently with the topical scientific subject for 2012 at the 2012 meetings, the inherent flexibility stressed by the Chairman’s letter ought to enable any of the seven topics listed in paragraph 22 to be

addressed in regard to the topical scientific subject for 2012.

18. The letter also recognized *the need to identify the relevant international organizations, professional and academic associations, and other NGOs and experts that we might wish to invite to participate in the Meeting of Experts and share their experience and expertise, on the same basis as in the previous intersessional programme.* A list of some 20 possible guests of the meeting assigned to the three Standing Agenda items was attached to his letter.

19. Some three weeks later, on 21 June 2012, Ambassador Boujemâa Delmi wrote again to States Parties to update them on preparations for the Meeting of Experts following a number of bilateral consultations and his consultations with the regional groups in the week of 11 to 15 June 2012. The Chairman in his letter proposed that the programme be slightly amended so that the opening session on the morning of Monday 11 June 2015 is devoted to *the opening formalities, an opportunity for any introductory statements and the traditional informal slot of around one hour for NGO statements.*

20. In addition, in response to requests from delegations, the Chairman has added *sub-items on codes of conduct and education and awareness-raising to the second science and technology session on Wednesday morning.* This amendment which effectively ensures that **all** seven of the topics listed in paragraph 22 of *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations* section of the *Final Document* will be addressed at MX/2012 is welcomed, as this will remove the illogical approach criticised in paragraph 17 above.

21. The Chairman's letter of 21 June also advises that in response to suggestions from delegations, he has asked *the Implementation Support Unit to prepare two additional background papers, one on new science and technology developments that have potential benefits for the Convention, and the other on resource mobilization for cooperation and assistance.* These additional papers, together with those already mentioned in paragraph 16 above, are welcomed. However, it is to be hoped that these will be made available to the States Parties soon as the value of the background papers will be limited if States Parties do not have time to consider them nationally prior to the Meeting of Experts.

22. The Chairman in his letter of 21 June also says that he would like *to distinguish more clearly between observers and guests of the meeting.* He states that *Intergovernmental organizations, such as United Nations organs, WHO, OPCW and INTERPOL, are entitled to participate in the Meeting of Experts as observers.... They do not require an invitation from the Chairman,* although he will write to inform them of the meeting. The letter consequently now has, as Attachment 3, a list of some nine *Organizations and Experts to be Invited by the Chairman as Guests of the Meeting.* Whilst it may well be true that intergovernmental organizations do not require an invitation from the Chairman, it is very much to be hoped that the letter from the Chairman to inform them of the Meeting of Experts will encourage the particular organizations listed in the Attachment to the Chairman's letter of 1 June 2012 to participate in regard to the specific skills and expertise indicated in the 1 June 2012 attachment. Thus, for example, that attachment included the following:

Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X

- *UNSCR 1540 Committee – as the mandated clearing house for relevant assistance and cooperation*

- *World Health Organization – for assistance to implement the IHR*
- *World Organization for Animal Health – for assistance to build animal disease surveillance and mitigation capacity*
- *Food and Agriculture Organization – for assistance to build animal disease surveillance and mitigation capacity*
- *Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity – for experience with the assistance clearing-house mechanisms under the CBD and Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety*

The value of the participation by the various organizations listed in the areas detailed is evident.

23. Whilst this Briefing Paper is primarily focussed on the Intersessional Period, it is not too early to be starting to look ahead to the Eighth Review Conference and how to prepare to ensure that this has a successful outcome.

Looking ahead to the Eighth Review Conference

24. While it is recognised that the success of the Eighth Review Conference will depend upon many political differences being overcome, and therefore upon the resolute determination of the States Parties as a whole to take the Convention forward, certain identified weaknesses³ in the Review Conference process nevertheless deserve early attention. Accordingly, in preparing for the Review Conference long before 2016, States Parties are recommended to consider addressing specific weaknesses in the process with the following remedies:

Use of time

1. The Conference should be of three full weeks' duration, with 15 working days. In practice this means from 7 to 25 November 2016 in order to avoid overlap with the already scheduled CWC Conference of States Parties at the Hague. After the CWC Conference of States Parties only 14 working days remain before (as in 2011) the UN shuts down for the Christmas break on 22 December 2016. In order to secure the period from 7 to 25 November 2016 for the Eighth Review Conference in Geneva, coordination with the First Committee in New York is required, to ensure in 2016 that the work of that Committee in so far as it relates to biological and toxin weapons will have been completed in time.

2. The Preparatory Committee meeting should be of three days' duration, including a third day with substantive exchanges of views on the issues that have been identified as meriting decisions at the Review Conference as a valuable complement to two days devoted to procedure.

Advance documentation

3. For the vast majority of participants in the Eighth Review Conference, this will be their first BTWC Review Conference. Consequently there is a real need for

³ Graham S. Pearson and Nicholas A. Sims, *The BTWC Seventh Review Conference: A Modest Outcome*, Bradford Review Conference Paper No. 31, University of Bradford, March 2012.

background papers that explain the process and the steps therein. Given that the Biological Weapons Convention Meetings Secretariat in the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, the precursor to the Implementation Support Unit, produced a *BWC Sixth Review Conference Background Paper*, the Implementation Support Unit should do likewise for the Eighth Review Conference and issue this no later than 12 months prior to the Eighth Review Conference.

4. The compilations of national reports from States Parties on compliance, on developments in science and technology relevant to the BTWC, and on Article X should be recognized as having a different status from other information papers and should be regarded as foreground preparatory documents of the Conference to be studied in advance and to form the basis of review at the Conference itself, in accordance with Article XII.

5. The report of the Implementation Support Unit for the Review Conference should show clearly where resources have proved inadequate to the tasks set by States Parties in fulfilment of the ISU mandate and should quantify the shortfall year by year.

6. The information paper on *Developments since the last Review Conference in other international organizations which may be relevant to the Convention* should include longer sections on A. The 1540 Committee, B. The Secretary-General of the United Nations and C. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as developments in all three are especially pertinent to the BTWC and are key elements in preparing for the Eighth Review Conference.

7. Working Papers should be submitted well in advance by States Parties and groups of States Parties and made available by posting on the unog.ch/bwc website.

8. The Think Zone should again be created on the unog.ch/bwc website with similar groupings of items by subject matter as in 2011.

General Debate

9. The particular value of group statements being made at the outset of the General Debate should be recognised and all groups of States Parties should be encouraged to make their statements at the outset as such group statements then have maximum impact and set the tone and the scene for the ensuing statements by the individual States Parties. In this respect, the European Union 'plus' statement should be made by the EU country in the Presidency at the time of the Eighth Review Conference on behalf of the EU 'plus' as a group of States Parties, instead of much later as an international organisation.

Article by Article Final Declaration

10. The importance of the extended understandings that have been developed which build from Review Conference to Review Conference on the language in the previous Article by Article *Final Declarations* needs to be recognised in preparing for the Eighth Review Conference, as these understandings are central to the life of the Convention and are, above all, forward-looking.

11. Common understandings reached during the four years of the Intersessional Process are the product of some eight weeks of work and these common understandings merit a **more systematic consideration** by the Committee of the Whole.

12. Common understandings reached during the Intersessional Process should be integrated Article by Article with the *Final Declaration* of the Seventh Review Conference into a preparatory document for the Committee of the Whole. This could readily be done by the Chairman-designate of the Committee of the Whole or by the ISU.

13. Common understandings reached during the Intersessional Process should in any case be placed first under each Article in the Annex of text submitted to the Committee of the Whole.

14. The particular value of proposals for text submitted by groups of States Parties, as well as by individual States Parties, to be submitted to the Committee of the Whole for incorporation into the Article by Article *Final Declaration* needs to be recognized and consequently more proposals submitted.

15. The fuller recognition of the forward-looking functions of the Article by Article *Final Declaration* should be achieved through the submitted proposals seeking to build upon the extended understandings from previous Review Conferences and focussing in particular on what the States Parties should do to strengthen the Convention over the next decade.

16. The European Union should agree that its proposals for language to be considered by the Committee of the Whole for the Article by Article *Final Declaration* should be agreed within the EU prior to the Review Conference and submitted through the EU country in the Presidency at the time of the Eighth Review Conference on behalf of the EU member states. A parallel approach should be adopted for language to be submitted for consideration in the Informal Plenaries for *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations*. [see point 18. below]

Part III: Decisions and Recommendations

17. The forward-looking functions of *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations* should be recognised as being of equal weight with those of the Article by Article *Final Declaration*.

18. The particular value of proposals for text for inclusion in *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations* submitted by groups of States Parties, as well as by individual States Parties, needs to be recognized and consequently proposals for such text specifically requested for submission prior to the start of the Review Conference.

19. Friends of the Chair or Facilitators should be appointed at the Preparatory Committee stage, if necessary in informal session, to conduct open-ended consultations on each major element likely to be considered for inclusion in *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations*, with a view to developing widely acceptable draft

text prior to or at the beginning of the Conference for consideration in the Informal Plenaries.

20. Proposals for text in *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations* should in any case be submitted earlier in the Conference than in 2011 to encourage timely consideration and enable Facilitators or Friends of the Chair to complete their allocated tasks in full knowledge of the range of proposals put to the Conference.

25. All in all, it is evident that all the States Parties engaged in the Eighth Review Conference need to recognize during the twelve months leading up to the Review Conference itself the importance of preparing and submitting proposals – either to the Committee of the Whole for the Article by Article *Final Declaration* or for channeling through to the Informal Plenaries for the *Part III: Decisions and Recommendations*. The timely submission of such proposals is vital to achieve a further strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention to ensure that biological agents and toxins are not misused to cause harm. All the States Parties need to be involved and to ensure that their ideas and proposals are submitted **prior** to the Review Conference itself.

Conclusions

26. In looking ahead to the Intersessional Period of 2012 to 2015, it has to be recognised that the four Meetings of Experts and four Meetings of States Parties in the Intersessional Process each lasting for only five days all face tightly packed agendas. It will be essential to make good use of the limited time available in order to do justice to each agenda item. Of equal importance to good timetabling is the submission of high quality papers by the States Parties and the ISU focussed on the topics to be addressed in each of the eight Meetings.

27. And although the Intersessional Period is tightly packed, it is not too early to start looking ahead to the Eighth Review Conference and preparing the ground for the successful consideration then of the outcomes needed to strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention.