

**Seventy-fifth session**

Agenda item 110

**Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,  
Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological)  
and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction****Report of the First Committee***Rapporteur:* Ms. María del Rosario **Estrada Girón** (Guatemala)**I. Introduction**

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2020, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-fifth session the item entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction” and to allocate it to the First Committee.

2. At its 1st meeting, on 6 October 2020, the First Committee, taking into consideration the physical distancing guidelines and constraints related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which prevented the Committee from organizing a full-fledged session, decided, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, to convene in-person and virtual meetings and to conduct its work in two phases: the first phase would be a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely items 94 to 110, and the second phase would be action on all draft proposals. In the absence of thematic discussions, the Committee also decided to convene three virtual informal meetings of two hours each for interactive dialogues on specific subjects.

3. At its 2nd to 10th meetings, on 9 and 12, from 14 to 16 and on 19 October, the Committee held a general debate, during which draft resolutions and decisions were introduced. On 13, 26 and 30 October, the Committee held virtual meetings for exchanges with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, civil society, and independent experts and other high-level officials nominated by the regional groups.



The Committee took action on all draft resolutions and decisions at its 11th to 15th meetings, on 3, 4, 6, 9 and 10 November.<sup>1</sup>

4. No documents were submitted for consideration under this item.

## II. Consideration of draft resolution [A/C.1/75/L.52](#)

5. On 13 October, the delegation of Hungary submitted a draft resolution entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction” ([A/C.1/75/L.52](#)).

6. At its 12th meeting, on 4 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.1/75/L.52](#) without a vote (see para. 7).

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<sup>1</sup> For an account of the Committee’s discussion of the item, see [A/C.1/75/PV.2](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.3](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.4](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.5](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.6](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.7](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.8](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.9](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.10](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.11](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.12](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.13](#), [A/C.1/75/PV.14](#) and [A/C.1/75/PV.15](#), as well as [A/C.1/75/INF/5](#).

### III. Recommendation of the First Committee

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

#### **Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its previous resolutions relating to the complete and effective prohibition of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and on their destruction,

*Noting* that there has been no increase in the number of ratifications of and accessions to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction,<sup>1</sup> and stressing at the same time that there is a continuing need to achieve its universalization,

*Reaffirming its call upon* all signatory States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay, and calling upon those States that have not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at the earliest possible date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention, which will facilitate its success,

*Bearing in mind* its call upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the implementation of the recommendations of the review conferences of the parties to the Convention, including the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, later amended by the Final Declaration of the Seventh Review Conference, and to provide such information and data in conformity with the standardized procedure to the Implementation Support Unit within the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat on an annual basis and no later than 15 April,

*Welcoming* the reaffirmation made in the Final Declarations of the Fourth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Review Conferences that under all circumstances the use of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention,

*Recognizing* the importance of ongoing efforts by States parties to enhance international cooperation, assistance and the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes, recognizing also that there still remain challenges to be overcome in order to enhance international cooperation, and recognizing further the value of building capacity through international cooperation as well as strengthening coordination and coherence of efforts of all relevant international organizations, in line with the Final Document of the Eighth Review Conference,<sup>2</sup>

*Reaffirming* the importance of national measures, in accordance with constitutional processes, in strengthening the implementation of the Convention by States parties, in line with the Final Document of the Eighth Review Conference,

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1015, No. 14860.

<sup>2</sup> [BWC/CONF.VIII/4](#) and [BWC/CONF.VIII/4/Corr.1](#).

*Reaffirming also* the importance of the review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention,

*Encouraging* the equitable participation of women and men in the framework of the Convention,

*Recalling* previous intersessional processes carried out under the Convention,

*Noting*, in the decisions and recommendations of the Final Document, that the Eighth Review Conference decided that States parties would hold annual meetings and that the first such meeting would start on 4 December 2017, have a duration of up to five days and seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process,

*Recalling* the decision of the Eighth Review Conference that the Ninth Review Conference shall be held in Geneva not later than 2021,

1. *Notes* the consensus outcome of and the decisions on all provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction reached at the Eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and calls upon States parties to the Convention to participate and actively engage in their continued implementation;

2. *Notes with appreciation* that the meeting of States parties to the Convention, held in Geneva from 4 to 8 December 2017, was able to reach consensus on reaffirming previous intersessional programmes carried out during the period 2003–2015, on retaining the previous structure of annual meetings of States parties preceded by annual meetings of experts, and on reaffirming that the purpose of the intersessional programme was to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on, those issues identified for inclusion in the intersessional programme, and that the work of the intersessional period would be guided by the aim of strengthening the implementation of all articles of the Convention in order to better respond to current challenges;<sup>3</sup>

3. *Also notes with appreciation* that, in the light of the need to balance an ambition to improve the intersessional programme within the financial and human resources constraints facing States parties, 12 days were allocated to the intersessional programme each year from 2018 to 2020, that the meetings of experts for eight days would be held back to back and at least three months before the annual meetings of States parties of four days each, and that the meetings of experts would be open-ended and would consider the following topics: cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X (two days); review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention (two days); strengthening national implementation (one day); assistance, response and preparedness (two days); and institutional strengthening of the Convention (one day);

4. *Appreciates* the information and data on confidence-building measures provided by States parties to the Convention to date, and calls upon all States parties to participate in the exchange of information and data on confidence-building measures called for in the relevant decisions of the review conferences, and invites them to make use of the new platform for electronic submission, on a voluntary basis, without prejudice to their choice of methods for submission;

5. *Notes* the decision of the Eighth Review Conference to continue and improve the database established by the Seventh Review Conference to facilitate

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<sup>3</sup> See [BWC/MSP/2017/6](#).

requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation, and urges States parties to submit to the Implementation Support Unit, on a voluntary basis, requests for and offers of cooperation and assistance, including in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information regarding the use of biological and toxin agents for peaceful purposes;

6. *Encourages* States parties to provide, at least biannually, appropriate information on their implementation of article X of the Convention and to collaborate to offer assistance or training, upon request, as contained in specific proposals, in support of the legislative and other implementation measures of States parties needed to ensure their compliance with the Convention;

7. *Notes* the decision of the Eighth Review Conference to renew the sponsorship programme established by the Seventh Review Conference in order to support and increase the participation of developing States parties in the annual meetings, welcomes the continued willingness among States parties to provide voluntary contributions, and calls upon States parties in a position to do so to offer voluntary contributions for the programme;

8. *Also notes* the decision of the Eighth Review Conference to renew the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit agreed to at the Seventh Review Conference, *mutatis mutandis*, for the period from 2017 to 2021, and notes with appreciation the work of the Unit;

9. *Notes with appreciation* the events organized by some States parties, regional organizations and the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat for exchanges of views on the implementation of the Convention, and encourages States parties to continue to participate in such informal exchanges and discussions;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to continue to provide such services as may be required for the conduct and the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the review conferences;

11. *Recalls* that the meeting of States parties in Geneva in December 2018 agreed that the financial difficulties of the Convention stemmed from three principal sources, namely the non-payment of contributions by some States parties, delays in the receipt of contributions from other States parties and the financial requirements of the United Nations with respect to activities not funded from its regular budget, and calls upon States parties to consider ways of addressing these serious issues as a matter of urgency;

12. *Notes* that the meeting of States parties in Geneva in December 2019 welcomed the improvement of the financial situation for that year, following the measures endorsed by the meeting of States parties in 2018, including the establishment of the working capital fund, and stressed the need to continue monitoring the financial situation of the Convention and requested the Chair of the 2020 meeting of States parties, in close consultation with the States parties, the Implementation Support Unit, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office at Geneva, to report on the overall financial situation of the Convention, implementation of the measures endorsed in 2018, and possible further measures, in a transparent way and taking into account outstanding credits for those States parties that paid their contribution in full, to bring about timely payment as required, for consideration by the 2020 meeting of States parties;<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See [BWC/MSP/2019/7](#), para. 23.

13. *Encourages* the meeting of States parties in 2021 to consider and to agree upon arrangements for the Ninth Review Conference, and its Preparatory Committee, taking into account section VIII of the report of the 2019 meeting of States parties;<sup>5</sup>

14. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-sixth session the item entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 31–32.