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**Ninth 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**

12 December 2023

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**Geneva, 28 November–16 December 2022**

**Summary record of the 3rd meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 2 December 2022, at 12.35 p.m.

*President:* Mr. Bencini .....(Italy)

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*The meeting was called to order at 12.35 p.m.*

**Election of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference and Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Committee of the Whole, the Drafting Committee and the Credentials Committee**  
(continued)

1. **The President**, noting that the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States had opted to nominate a member of the delegation of Indonesia to serve as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference, said he would take it that the Conference wished to elect the representative of Indonesia Vice-President by acclamation.
2. *It was so decided.*
3. **The President** said that the delegations of the States members of the Group should put forward a candidate for the last remaining vice-presidency to be filled by a Group representative. The Group's nominees for the remaining offices of Vice-Chair of the Committee of the Whole were Mr. Jonelle John S. Domingo of the Philippines and Mr. Ángel Valjean Horna Chicchón of Peru. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Conference wished to elect them Vice-Chairs by acclamation.
4. *It was so decided.*
5. **The President** said that he had been informed that Mr. Angus September of South Africa had been elected Chair of the Credentials Committee. The agenda item would remain open until the election of the Conference's last remaining Vice-President.

**Credentials of representatives to the Conference:**

**(a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee** (continued)

6. **The President**, noting that all but one of the members of the Credentials Committee had been appointed at the first plenary meeting of the Conference, said that he had been informed that the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States had chosen to make a member of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran the Committee's final member. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Conference supported the Group's choice.
7. *It was so decided.*

**Preparation and adoption of the final document(s)**

8. **The President**, summarizing his plans for the coming meetings, said that the Drafting Committee, which was chaired by Ms. Sara Lindegren of Sweden, would work on the forward-looking components of the final document. He had put together a diverse team of facilitators – including one representative each of the delegations of Malawi, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Panama and the Philippines – to help the Drafting Committee with its work. All delegations were encouraged to engage with the facilitators with a view to translating the views they had expressed during the general debate into specific proposals for the final document. Representatives of all States parties could participate in the work of the Drafting Committee.
9. The aim of his plans was to ensure that the Drafting Committee's work on chapter III of the final document, which would contain the Conference's decisions and recommendations, was efficient, inclusive and transparent. The Committee of the Whole, on the other hand, would focus on chapter II of the final document. He would welcome comments from delegations on his plans.
10. **Mr. Robatjazi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he wished to know whether he had understood correctly that it was the President's intention to have the Drafting Committee – which, according to rule 36 (1) of the rules of procedure, should, without reopening substantive discussion on any matter, coordinate the drafting of and edit all texts referred to it by the Conference – deal with substantive issues. He wondered, if so, whether such a plan would not be an unprecedented departure from the Conference's usual practice.

11. The presidency should ensure that it followed the rules of procedure. The consideration of substantive issues should take place in forums other than the Drafting Committee.
12. **The President** said that it was not his intention to have the Drafting Committee reopen discussion on substantive matters. It would focus on drafting the forward-looking chapter of the final document.
13. The Conference did not have the luxury of time. Delegations should, as he had suggested earlier, come forward with specific proposals for the wording of the views they had expressed orally during the general debate. Proposed wording for the forward-looking chapter would be especially welcome.
14. **Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom) said that the Conference needed a means of ensuring that the proposals for wording that had already been received could be shaped into a coherent whole in a transparent, efficient and inclusive manner. The plan put forward by the President was well suited to that purpose.
15. **Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) said that rule 36 (1) of the rules of procedure made it clear that the Conference did not have the flexibility to have the Drafting Committee consider substantive matters. The Drafting Committee was simply to coordinate the drafting of and edit all texts referred to it by the Conference.
16. No one was likely to object to the Drafting Committee's starting its work, but for it to do so, the Conference would have to decide which of the proposals that had been made it wished to accept and submit a draft of the final document to the Drafting Committee. Only then could the Drafting Committee begin matters in earnest.
17. **Mr. Sánchez de Lerín García-Ovies** (Spain) said that his delegation attached considerable importance to transparency and inclusivity. It was in favour of proceeding as outlined by the President.
18. **Mr. Ward** (United States of America) said that the rules of procedure, of which the Conference had historically taken notice only when they had been breached, were meant to enable the Conference's efforts, not to put it in a straitjacket. The Conference, which had sometimes but not always had a drafting committee, had always adapted to circumstances, generally following the President's lead.
19. The proposal outlined by the President should be agreed to. Earlier in the day, delegations had expressed support for the creation of a panel to review scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention. The best way to move forward with the creation of that panel, on which there appeared to be complete agreement, would be for the Drafting Committee to work out the details and identify any broader issues that should be brought back to the Committee of the Whole.
20. A proposal for the implementation of article VII of the Convention, which the United States supported, had been submitted in writing by the delegation of South Africa several years earlier. Proposals had been made to set up a working group on strengthening the Convention that would meet during the intersessional period. Those proposals could be considered by the Drafting Committee, thereby perhaps limiting the amount of political discussion by the Conference meeting in plenary.
21. The Conference, as the President had noted, had little time. If matters were not seen to concurrently, they might not be seen to at all.
22. **Mr. Poor Toulabi** (Kingdom of the Netherlands) said that, as substantive discussion had already taken place in the Committee of the Whole, it was time, as the President had noted, for the Drafting Committee to get down to business. The proposals that were on the table could not be fine-tuned if they were not referred to the Drafting Committee.
23. **Ms. Hill** (Australia) said that it was time for work on the drafting of the final document to begin and that it should be done in the transparent and inclusive way suggested by the President, which was fully compatible with the Conference's rules of procedure.
24. **Ms. Petit** (France) said that, as a number of specific proposals for the wording of the draft final document had been made in writing, it was time, as others, too, had noted, for the

Drafting Committee to produce a document that would make it possible for the Conference to move its work forward.

25. **Mr. Fetz** (Canada) said that the approach taken by the President was sound. There had been extensive substantive discussions in the plenary meetings, in the Committee of the Whole and with the facilitators. Any new issue that arose could be referred to the Conference meeting in plenary or the Committee of the Whole. Rule 36 (1) of the Conference's rules of procedure did not preclude the Conference from referring proposals to the Drafting Committee.

26. **Mr. Ogasawara** (Japan) said that his delegation fully supported the President's plans, which had been clearly outlined even before the opening of the Conference and were compatible with its rules of procedure. His delegation also appreciated the emphasis that the President placed on the forward-looking chapter of the final document.

27. **Mr. Bilgeri** (Austria) said that the conservative interpretation of the responsibilities of the Drafting Committee, a body that the Conference had not relied on for years, no longer suited the Conference's needs. His delegation favoured an interpretation of rule 36 (1) that would enable the Drafting Committee to draft a report and thereby add genuine value to the Conference.

28. Delegations could not simply wait for the Committee of the Whole to finish its work. Progress also had to be made on a second track. The proposal made by the President was thus the most appropriate way forward.

29. **Ms. Boels** (Belgium) said that her delegation, too, supported the transparent and inclusive course of action proposed by the President.

30. **Mr. Espinosa Olivera** (Mexico) said that his delegation provisionally supported the way forward proposed by the President. The emphasis placed by the President on the inclusivity and transparency of the Drafting Committee's work was clearly compatible with rule 36 (3) of the rules of procedure. Those rules should be respected, but they should also be read with the necessary flexibility. Substantive work should proceed without delay.

31. **Mr. Padilla González** (Cuba), noting that the rules of procedure were the regulatory framework for the proceedings of the Conference, said that the Conference could proceed flexibly as long as all States parties were represented on the Drafting Committee and as long as the Drafting Committee referred all issues of a more general nature to the Conference meeting in plenary.

32. **Ms. Bellmann** (Germany) said that her delegation, like the majority of those that had taken the floor, supported the approach laid out by the President.

33. **Mr. Ivaschenko** (Ukraine) said that his delegation, too, supported the President's planned approach and encouraged other delegations to do likewise.

34. **The President** said that he would consult with delegations over the lunch break and present an amended proposal at the meeting to be held later in the afternoon.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*