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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**

2 November 2023

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

**Summary record of the 7th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 12 December 2022, at 10 a.m.

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

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

1. **The President** said that the meeting represented an opportunity to break the deadlock that had hindered the work of the Conference over the previous two decades. The package of proposals outlined in the three draft documents proposed for inclusion in the draft final document of the Conference, which had been circulated informally in English only, would make for an action-oriented intersessional programme and would promote discussion of issues such as verification and compliance. The draft proposals addressed the possibility of establishing institutional mechanisms to promote international cooperation under article X of the Convention and strengthening the Implementation Support Unit in its efforts to support the implementation of the Convention by States parties.

2. The persons responsible for drafting the proposals had been asked to use specific language where there was a possibility for consensus; to exclude proposals on which it would be too difficult to achieve consensus; to include proposals that had been discussed for a considerable period of time and were ripe for action; to eliminate duplications; to place certain decisions and recommendations in a different part of the document; to merge similar proposals; and to draft a text that was as comprehensive and balanced as possible.

### **Credentials of representatives to the Conference**

#### *(b) Report of the Credentials Committee*

3. **Mr. September** (South Africa), speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Credentials Committee, said that the Committee had begun the process of verifying the original credentials submitted thus far. As at midday on 9 December 2022, 71 States parties had submitted original copies of their credentials, while 40 had submitted only advance copies. In the interim, the secretariat of the Credentials Committee had received a further two or three original copies of credentials. All States parties that had not yet submitted the original copy of their credentials to the secretariat were invited to do so as soon as possible. Delegations should note that the submission of credentials was mandatory under the rules of procedure of the ninth Review Conference.

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

4. **The President** invited the delegations to consider a joint non-paper, circulated informally in English only, containing the proposed draft text of chapter III, "Decisions and recommendations", of the draft final document of the Conference.

5. **Mr. Ward** (United States of America) said that he would welcome further information on the intersessional programme described in section B of the proposed text. In particular, he wished to know how many weeks per year would be devoted to the programme, how many years it would cover and what process would be used to determine those timescales and the activities that the programme covered. The Conference might consider holding a discussion to establish how much time the group of experts should devote to discussing each of the proposed sets of measures for strengthening the Convention. It might be possible for the group to address more than one set of measures in a single meeting.

6. **Mr. Domingo** (Philippines) said that the proposed text represented a middle path that would enable the Conference to make progress in its work. Following that middle path would involve working towards three goals: first, the establishment of an advisory mechanism on science and technology that would inform the Conference's future discussions; secondly, the setting up of a mechanism for international cooperation to promote the implementation of article X; and thirdly, the creation of a group of experts to facilitate discussions on institutionalization, including verification and compliance, and the establishment of an agency. The Conference should aim to adopt a balanced package of proposals that addressed all three goals. He was pleased to note that the general outline of a consensus around those goals seemed to be materializing, and that consensus on national implementation, confidence-building measures, the implementation of article VII and financial matters also appeared to be within reach.

7. **Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) said that separate discussions should be held on the intersessional programme, with the aim of achieving a consensus on the organization of

work under the Convention for the new review period. His delegation was unable to share the previous speakers' enthusiasm for the proposals in sections C, on international cooperation, D, on the review of developments in science and technology relevant for the Convention, E, on national implementation and confidence-building measures, and F, on assistance, response, and preparedness.

8. It was not clear what methodology had been used to draft the proposals, many of which were new to his delegation. Most of the proposals included in the draft had been made by only a small number of States parties and were not sufficiently developed. Those put forward by the majority of States parties, particularly those comprising the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States, had not been included in any form. The proposals concerning the Implementation Support Unit, the sponsorship programme and financial matters should also be discussed separately, with a view to establishing a consensus on their wording.

9. **Mr. Aslanargun** (Türkiye) said that his delegation welcomed the decision to establish a group of experts on the strengthening of the Convention that would be open to all States parties. He supported the proposal to make the group responsible for addressing compliance and verification, enhancing international cooperation and assistance, improving transparency and confidence-building measures, promoting national implementation of the Convention, strengthening assistance, response and preparedness under article VII and strengthening institutions. The decision to convene a conference to examine the final report of the group of experts should be based on a consensus decision in accordance with a general rule included in the rules of procedure.

10. His delegation welcomed the proposal to establish a steering group for facilitating international cooperation under article X. It was also pleased to note the proposals to develop an action plan and a voluntary trust fund for the implementation of article X and to expand the system of databases relating to cooperation and assistance.

11. Türkiye supported the proposal to establish a mechanism for conducting regular expert reviews of scientific and technological developments. All States parties should be able to participate in that mechanism. The references in the proposed text to cooperation with the life science community were somewhat repetitive and should be cut back. He was pleased to note the proposals for establishing a set of voluntary guidelines on the application of article VII and for creating a database to facilitate assistance under that article.

12. The mandate of the Implementation Support Unit should be renewed in the usual manner; it was not necessary to establish a new renewal procedure. Very careful consideration should be given to the financial implications of the proposal to establish new full-time staff positions within the Unit.

13. **Mr. Bilgeri** (Austria) said the proposals under discussion were well balanced and took into account a wide range of views from different parts of the world. Contrary to the view expressed by the delegate of the Russian Federation, he recognized that many of the proposals had been made by cross-regional groups representing different parts of the world and had been discussed at length at the meetings of States parties. Although it was true that a significant amount of work could be done during the intersessional period, it was also important to acknowledge that certain decisions should be taken at the Conference. A good balance had been struck in the draft text between proposals that should be adopted during the Conference and those that could be discussed over the coming months.

14. **Mr. Damico** (Brazil) said that the draft proposals were well aligned with the views that had been expressed during the discussions. It would be useful to consider which of the proposals could be agreed on during the Conference and which should be discussed further during the intersessional period. It would certainly not be easy for the Conference to make progress but it should not be disheartened by past failures to fulfil its mandate.

15. **Mr. Benítez Versión** (Cuba) said that, while the draft text contained some positive elements, intensive discussions would be required before consensus could be achieved on some sections, particularly sections B, on the intersessional programme for 2023–2026, C, on international cooperation, and D, on the review of developments in science and technology

relevant for the Convention, which were notably unbalanced. His delegation would present detailed proposals for each section in due course.

16. **Ms. Stromšíková** (Czechia) said that the language in section C of the draft text, on international cooperation, concerning the proposed steering group on article X was not entirely clear, particularly the assertion that the composition of the steering group would reflect the “proportion of States parties in current and future informal regional groups”. Regarding section D, on the review of developments in science and technology relevant for the Convention, some common-sense proposals had been made during the Conference with regard to the scientific advisory process, including in relation to its terms of reference and its rules of procedure. Moreover, there appeared to be general consensus on the need for the process. Her delegation therefore saw no need to defer the establishment of the advisory groups to the following Meeting of States Parties.

17. **Mr. Sánchez de Lerín García-Ovies** (Spain) said that he agreed with the representative of the Russian Federation that not all of the topics discussed over the course of the Conference were reflected in the draft text; however, he understood that an attempt had been made to reflect only those issues on which consensus was possible. In view of the little remaining time available, his delegation was of the view that a general framework should be agreed upon at the current session and that the finer details should be left for the intersessional period. He agreed with the representative of Brazil on the need to strike a balance in the Conference’s ambitions and to deliver positive results in the interests of the public, especially in the light of the suffering caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the vulnerabilities it had revealed. His Government was therefore willing to commit itself fully to international cooperation and to facilitating access to science and technology; it was not afraid of assuming new costs and deploying considerable efforts in that regard, provided that results were achieved in other areas. In particular, there was a pressing need for a preparatory structured dialogue on verification efforts and for further measures to systematize and strengthen the Convention.

18. **Mr. Khalid** (Pakistan) said that there was a need to strike a balance not only in terms of ambitions, but also in terms of substance. That meant, in particular, defining operational outcomes that could be fully implemented. With regard to section B of the proposed text, on the intersessional programme for 2023–2026, there was a need for greater clarity on the programme and the mandate of the proposed group of experts on the strengthening of the Convention. On sections C, on international cooperation, and D, on the review of developments in science and technology relevant for the Convention, he agreed with the representative of Cuba that more intensive discussions were called for. Certain proposals that had been made by members of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States were not adequately reflected in the proposed text and should be duly taken into account.

19. **Mr. Damazio** (Nigeria) said that his delegation welcomed the proposed draft text and wished to urge the Implementation Support Unit to promptly finalize its schedule of dates for intersessional meetings and submit its conclusions for the consideration of States parties. The proposed text had been drafted according to a non-discriminatory approach and addressed salient issues that continued to hamper the implementation and strengthening of the Convention. Section C, on international cooperation, was comprehensive and balanced, and he welcomed the proposal to establish an inclusive steering body to further strengthen the Convention. He urged all States parties to demonstrate the flexibility needed to adopt the entire draft final document, including that vital section. His delegation also wished to reiterate its support for the establishment of a temporary group of experts to build confidence and enhance transparency.

20. **Mr. Ogasawara** (Japan) said that the proposed text was constructive and well-balanced and would serve as a good basis for achieving consensus by the end of the Conference. For Japan, two elements were imperative if the Convention regime was to be strengthened: the delegation of decision-making power from the Conference during the intersessional period; and the adoption of concrete proposals on which there existed a broad consensus among State parties. Those two elements were adequately reflected in the proposed text, and his delegation was largely in agreement with all the proposals made therein, including those related to strengthening the Implementation Support Unit.

21. In strengthening the Convention regime, it was important to avoid duplication with the activities of other relevant international organizations, such as the World Health Organization. In paragraph 49 of the proposed text, a new position within the Implementation Support Unit with a mandate to facilitate enhanced cooperation with relevant international organizations was proposed. It would be beneficial for everyone if the mandate for that position included activities under article X, so that all State parties could be kept duly informed of the relevant activities undertaken by other international organizations.

22. Care should be taken in respect of the proposed new mechanisms to avoid any overlapping of the functions between them, in particular between the proposed group of experts on the strengthening of the Convention, which would have a mandate to enhance international cooperation and assistance under article X, and the proposed article X implementation steering group; perhaps the two mechanisms could be merged. Lastly, with reference to paragraph 41 (b), the idea of encouraging a step-by-step approach to the submission of national reports on confidence-building measures was specifically relevant to those countries that were facing technical difficulties. That should be made explicit in the subparagraph through the insertion of the word “technical” before the word “difficulties”.

23. **Mr. Rydning** (Norway) said that the package of proposals outlined in the proposed text was comprehensive and well balanced, encompassing elements that had cross-regional origins and support. His delegation supported the strengthening of the Implementation Support Unit, as one of the most cost-effective ways to strengthen the Convention in the short term. The intersessional work programme, however, could be made even more focused, including in terms of time allocation, by setting deadlines to earlier than 2025, and in terms of the decision-making power afforded to the Meeting of States Parties. Shorter timelines and the possibility of making decisions as soon as discussions had matured tended to ensure greater momentum and focus. If there were issues that required more time for consideration, work could be continued into a new two-year period.

24. **Ms. Schiaffino** (Argentina) said that the proposed text would serve as an excellent basis for achieving consensus in a balanced manner, with a view to strengthening the Convention and providing the Implementation Support Unit with the resources necessary to fulfil its mandate. Her delegation was willing to work constructively throughout the rest of the Conference to move in that direction; however, more clarity was needed on the financial implications of the proposals made in the draft text, the meetings to be held during the intersessional period, as described in paragraph 61, and the positions to be established within the Implementation Support Unit, as described in paragraph 52.

25. **Mr. Robotjazi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation looked forward to further discussion on those elements in the proposed text that could form the basis of consensus and agreement. There were, however, other elements and proposals on which it would be difficult to achieve consensus. In particular, sections B, on the intersessional programme for 2023–2026, C, on international cooperation and D, the review of developments in science and technology relevant for the Convention, demanded intensive discussions and consultations over the following days. A first reading of sections C and D had revealed significant imbalances. Many of the points made by his delegation during the Conference were not reflected therein, and he would offer specific comments and proposals when those sections were discussed in detail. Sections E, on national implementation and confidence-building measures, F, on assistance, response, and preparedness, and G, on the Implementation Support Unit, contained proposals and elements that were not conducive to advancing the work of the Conference or to achieving its goals; in the light of the discussions during the Conference, it was unlikely that agreement could be achieved on many of them. Nonetheless, through constructive work and active engagement, it would be possible to adopt a shortened document that was acceptable to all delegations.

26. **Ms. Boels** (Belgium) said that the draft text would serve as a good basis for the Conference’s work over the following week. It was comprehensive and balanced, and many of the proposals it contained had a cross-regional basis and had been discussed during the intersessional period. With regard to the intersessional work programme, it would be useful to have clearer and perhaps shorter timelines, as well as the opportunity to make decisions on the outcome of the work once it had been completed. Her delegation stood ready to work constructively on the draft text in over the following week.

27. **Mr. Masmajaan** (Switzerland) said that the proposed text, which broadly reflected the proposals made over the course of the Conference, had been compiled in such a way as to allow all States parties to gradually converge around common elements and draw up an overall package on which they could all agree. His delegation welcomed the fact that section B, on the intersessional programme for 2023–2026, reflected the seemingly general agreement on the need for a more ambitious intersessional programme. However, many of the details of the mandate of the proposed group of experts, in particular the length of its mandate, required clarification. The mandate’s duration should be clearly defined, not simply set to run until the following Conference. His delegation welcomed the proposals made with a view to facilitating cooperation, including on the establishment of a steering group and a voluntary fund for cooperation projects. It also welcomed the proposal to establish a mechanism for reviewing developments in science and technology relevant for the Convention and the proposal to establish voluntary guidelines for requesting assistance under article VII, described in paragraph 44 of the draft text. It would be useful to include the exact text of those guidelines in an annex to the final version of the document. His delegation also supported the proposal, in paragraph 45 of the text, to establish a database to facilitate assistance within the framework of article VII, and the proposal, in paragraph 32, to endorse the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists.

28. **Ms. Petit** (France) said that the proposed text was a balanced document that consolidated diverse proposals, including cross-regional proposals that had been discussed since the previous review cycle. Her delegation welcomed, in particular, the proposed intersessional programme for 2023–2026, which, although a solid basis for work towards the next Review Conference, could be further discussed and improved upon. She also welcomed the proposal to strengthen the Implementation Support Unit by renewing its mandate on a continuous basis, which would remove some uncertainty over the continuity of its activities, and by establishing four new full-time staff positions so that it could carry out all of the tasks assigned to it. States parties now had a unique opportunity to pursue several projects that were ripe for implementation, either immediately or following intersessional discussions.

29. **Mr. Rosandry** (Indonesia) said that his delegation supported the proposed draft, considering that an excellent effort had been made to strike a balance in the text. However, more time would be needed to give careful consideration to all of the inputs and views expressed by delegations and to reach a consensus.

30. **Mr. Hassan** (Sudan) said that the Conference seemed to be moving towards a consensus on the proposed text, which was a positive development. While the deliberations at the beginning of the Conference had been marked by the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war, they had subsequently resumed their normal course, focusing on international peace and security, with delegations finding significant convergence. It was encouraging that most delegations had expressed support for the current draft, which represented a sincere attempt to integrate the ideas and proposals of all States parties. His delegation welcomed the proposed intersessional programme, but considered that it should address a limited number of themes, while reflecting the ambitions of States parties and taking into account the need to support and improve implementation of the Convention. International cooperation should take precedence over the establishment of scientific and advisory groups, as an excessive focus on science would diminish the representation and participation of developing countries. Sudan welcomed the language expressing appreciation for the work of the Implementation Support Unit, considering that it was imperative to expand the Unit’s staff so that it could better fulfil its mandate, including in relation to the universalization of the Convention.

31. **Mr. Poor Toulabi** (Kingdom of the Netherlands) said that the draft was balanced, comprehensive and representative of the views expressed during the Conference and intersessional meetings. It was pleasing to note that it laid out a clear path forward on the implementation of article X and included a science and technology review mechanism, measures to enhance national implementation and a programme for the intersessional period. The delegation of the Netherlands agreed that several issues were ripe for more convincing action. The science and technology mechanism was a good example of an area in which much work had already been done, and its further development would benefit both the Convention

and States parties. That the draft did not reflect all of the views expressed by all delegations seemed unavoidable in a forum that included almost 200 States parties.

32. **Mr. Walsh** (Ireland) said that the draft provided an excellent basis for continued efforts to strengthen the Convention. The wording of section C, on international cooperation, was a good reflection of the common ground that had been found, although some minor changes might be needed to clarify the mandate of the proposed article X implementation steering group. For example, in paragraph 22, the idea of an “overview function” could be explained in greater detail. Nevertheless, his delegation welcomed the proposal for a mechanism that could bolster the practical implementation of article X. Regarding the proposal in section B for an intersessional programme with an action-oriented process, it was important to adopt a clear set of instructions in order to avoid procedural pitfalls: the group of experts on the strengthening of the Convention should not devote precious time and resources to the discussion of its own mandate and priorities. It would therefore be advisable to clarify the language under paragraph 9 (a) to (f), which described the areas to be considered by the group of experts.

33. The proposal in section D to establish a science and technology review mechanism was particularly welcome, as the mechanism would provide essential guidance to the Conference. Ireland also supported the strengthening of the Implementation Support Unit, but considered that it might be necessary to harmonize the Unit’s functions, as described in section G, with the planned mandate of the article X implementation steering group. On the whole, the draft was balanced and showed a sincere effort to reflect the different cross-regional views that had been expressed during the current Conference and over the entire review cycle.

34. **Mr. Kordasch** (Germany) said that the draft represented a good basis for the work of the Conference and would allow for substantial progress towards strengthening the Convention. The draft contained a set of proposals – especially those on the science and technology review process and on international cooperation – that reflected the broad interests of all States parties and not only the interests of a particular group. His delegation agreed that certain issues were ripe for action. It was important to agree on a structured and focused framework to address further issues during the intersessional period. Germany recognized the value of having intersessional work with specific timelines, and would support a science and technology process that balanced effectiveness and inclusivity.

35. **Ms. Pek** (Singapore) said that the draft was balanced and formed a good basis for negotiations. In principle, her delegation supported the establishment of the article X implementation steering group to better facilitate international cooperation. However, it wished to study the details further, especially the terms of reference of the steering group, whose activities should not duplicate other efforts or erode the national rights of States parties.

36. The endorsement, in paragraph 32, of the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists was particularly welcome, as was the approach, in paragraph 34, to biorisk management; Singapore favoured a multi-stakeholder approach to cooperation in science and technology. Her delegation particularly supported the proposals in section E, on national implementation and confidence-building measures, as initiatives to build mutual trust and confidence could make an important positive contribution in the current geopolitical climate.

37. **Mr. Omarov** (Kazakhstan) said that, while his delegation awaited instructions from the capital, it was of the view that the agenda of the group of experts on the strengthening of the Convention, as set forth in paragraph 9, was rather expansive. The issues addressed under subparagraphs (b), (d) and (e) were taken up in later sections; thus, to avoid duplication, it might be wise to retain only subparagraphs (a), (c) and (f). Furthermore, paragraph 52, which referred to four new positions to be established within the Implementation Support Unit, should be aligned with paragraphs 26, 31 and 49, which mentioned three positions. One approach would be to insert, in paragraph 52, cross-references to the earlier paragraphs.

38. **Mr. Berkat** (Algeria) said that the draft formed a good basis for the emergence of consensus on a comprehensive and balanced final document. A general reading of the document revealed three main elements for the strengthening of the Convention: the intersessional process; the implementation of article X; and the review of developments in

science and technology relevant for the Convention. His delegation particularly welcomed the establishment of the article X implementation steering group and that of a mechanism to review scientific and technological developments. Additional intersessional work would be necessary to follow up on the establishment of the two mechanisms and to define any additional elements that might be necessary. His delegation took the view that activities in respect of the two mechanisms should be seen as a step towards the operationalization and institutionalization of the Convention through the negotiation of a legal instrument covering all aspects of its implementation. Algeria supported the renewal of the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit for the upcoming review cycle and the creation of new positions within the Unit to accompany the new mechanisms.

39. **Ms. Lemus Álvarez** (Guatemala) said that she was grateful to the facilitators for their professionalism and creativity in seeking language that balanced the different positions of States parties. The proposals set forth in the draft represented an interesting point of departure, considering that compromise and resolve would be needed to overcome the lack of progress of the previous 20 years. For Guatemala, the focus should be on ensuring that the proposals adopted were balanced, clear at the moment of implementation, and effectively contributed to the strengthening of the Convention. Her delegation considered that it should be possible to find common ground through a package of measures that reflected the multidimensional character of the Convention, and that the proposals on the intersessional programme, international cooperation and science and technology provided the right path towards continued progress.

40. **Ms. Andarcia** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that, while considerable work had gone into the draft, it could be more balanced in reflecting the positions of all States parties. In particular, there was room for improvement in respect of sections B and C, on the intersessional programme and international cooperation, respectively. Her delegation wished to urgently reiterate the need to strengthen the Convention by negotiating legally binding instruments that covered all provisions of the Convention in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner.

41. **Mr. Li Song** (China), noting that the three draft documents that had been circulated constituted a solid basis for the work of the Conference, said that States parties should seize the opportunity before them to reaffirm their commitment to the Convention. They should also express their shared determination to strengthen the Convention in the coming years and underscore the utility of an intersessional programme, during which the issues of importance to all States parties could be fully explored. His country's views on the intersessional programme were largely aligned with those of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States.

42. The Conference's greatest ambition as it entered its final week should be to reach consensus on a final document. His delegation was willing to work with all parties to ensure that ambition was achieved.

43. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay), calling on all States parties to show the flexibility that would make it possible for the Conference to achieve concrete results, said that her country viewed with particular favour the proposal to create a mechanism for the implementation of article X. It was also in favour of the proposals to adopt confidence-building measures. Her delegation, like the delegation of Argentina, was concerned about the cost of the proposals, however.

44. **Mr. Matos Pérez** (Dominican Republic) said that he trusted that the final document would constitute a point of departure from which to take the work of the Conference forward.

45. **Ms. Hill** (Australia) said that, to avoid sterile discussion of issues of little substance, the Conference should provide clear guidance on the mandate and methods of work of the group of experts on strengthening the Convention that would meet during the intersessional period. The time frame for the group's work should reflect the urgency of that work, and the Meetings of States Parties should be empowered to make decisions that could be built on throughout the review cycle.

46. She welcomed the inclusion in the proposed text of a call for States parties in a position to do so to consider making contributions to the Implementation Support Unit to

enhance its ability to carry out its mandated tasks. Her delegation, like others, was of the view that the draft documents presented by the President were a good basis for progress towards the goal of strengthening the Convention.

47. **Mr. García Ortíz** (El Salvador), noting that the proposed text formed a good basis for the work of the Conference, said that his delegation would continue to study the document as it awaited instructions from the capital. He too would like to know what the financial implications of the proposed measures were.

48. **Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom), noting that the three documents that had been circulated formed a good basis for further work, said that the Conference needed to decide what it could take up in the days ahead and what needed to be saved for discussion by experts during the intersessional period. The forthcoming expert discussions, which should be approached with a sense of urgency, should remain focused on the issues central to the strengthening of the Convention.

49. **Mr. Espinosa Olivera** (Mexico) said that, while his delegation, too, was waiting for comments from the capital on the three draft documents, it saw them as an attempt to give equal consideration to the priorities of a wide range of delegations.

50. He welcomed the facilitators' efforts in putting together chapter II of the draft final document, the Conference's final declaration, in particular the reference to the lessons learned in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also welcome were references to States parties' determination to condemn the threat of use of biological agents for purposes other than peaceful ones and to their conviction that a gender perspective should be further integrated into all aspects of the implementation of the Convention.

51. The proposed text of chapter III, which set out the Conference's decisions and recommendations, would make it possible to develop a more robust intersessional mechanism. The decision to establish a steering group to facilitate international cooperation within the framework of article X was especially welcome, as was the plan for the working group on strengthening the Convention to address measures for the national implementation of the Convention. On the whole, the stage was set, but there were still matters to be considered in greater detail.

52. **Mr. Moungui Medi** (Cameroon), welcoming the efforts that had been made to ensure that the priorities of the delegations were reflected in the proposed draft document, said that the Implementation Support Unit should be strengthened to ensure that it was in a position to fulfil its mandate. His delegation supported the proposal for the establishment of a voluntary trust fund to support projects relevant to the implementation of article X. It also supported planned efforts to ensure that men and women were equally represented at meetings related to the Convention, and the proposed creation of a mechanism to review scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention and the article X steering group. All States parties should have access to an improved database that would facilitate the provision of assistance to any States parties that requested it under article VII of the Convention.

53. **Mr. Ray** (India) said that, in the time it had left, the Conference should focus on the relatively few issues touched on in the proposed draft text on which there were major differences.

54. **Ms. Tarbush** (State of Palestine) said that the final document should give roughly equal weight to three major themes – namely, the intersessional programme, international cooperation and the review of scientific and technological developments. The mandate of the steering group on article X, an article of critical importance to the global South, should be strengthened to ensure that the balance that would be needed to achieve consensus on the draft final document could be struck.

55. **The President**, thanking delegations for their comments, said that he had been encouraged to hear that the three draft documents, which would be combined into a single document, constituted a good point of departure.

*The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.*