

**MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES
TO THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION
5-9 DECEMBER 2005**

Statement by Dr. Brian Rappert, Department of Sociology and Philosophy, University of Exeter, United Kingdom (As Delivered)

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Representatives,

I am delighted for the opportunity to address this Meeting of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The topic for this year's inter-sessional meeting, 'the content, promulgation, and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists', is one that has preoccupied much of my time in recent years.

Mr. Chairman I would like to start by emphasising again a point made in my statement to the Meeting of Experts in June 2005: States Parties have a crucial role in providing global leadership regarding the adoption of codes. Interest in codes in relation to biological weapons is not new to the 21st century, though progress in adopting them to date has been modest. Whatever is agreed at this meeting will provide a key signal regarding the international communities' concern about biological weapons; this signal will reach far beyond those traditionally concerned with arms control. While it is agreed that scientists, societies and institutions should develop codes rather than have them imposed by the States Parties to the BTWC, the States Parties have a vital role in underscoring the importance of prohibiting biological weapons and in stimulating activities undertaken elsewhere.

In this regard, Mr. Chairman, it is important that this meeting provide more than just a general agreement about the value of codes, but offer as much as it can by the way of substantive proposals for the nature any codes. In this regard, I particularly welcome the contribution this morning from Germany. The Synthesis Document produced in preparation for this meeting likewise has offered various helpful suggestions for the content of codes. A couple of reflections need to be made on this document. First, much of it is pitched at the responsibilities of individuals. Yet, responsibility for minimizing the risk that life sciences may be used for hostile purposes is not just a matter for individuals. Professional organizations, funders, bodies representing science, and others all have their role to play and this should be acknowledged.

Second, many of the suggestions address compliance with existing national and international biological safety and security standards, regulations and laws. While this is vital, where scientists or professional bodies regard existing measures as inadequate, they should be encouraged through codes to raise those concerns. Following on from this, codes should not be justified as a way of 'avoiding the need for more stringent and restrictive laws and regulations' (as suggested in the Adoption section of the Synthesis Document), but rather an opportunity of fostering due diligence where needed.

Mr. Chairman, as your mandate requires that "The Sixth Review Conference will consider the work of these meetings and decide on any further action." it is appropriate to consider what further action should be taken by the Sixth Review Conference next year:

- First, it will be important that the States Parties at the Sixth Review Conference agree an

affirmation, in the Article V section of their Final Declaration, of the value of ‘simple, clear and easily understandable information both for scientists and to wider civil society’ in helping to achieve in depth compliance with the Convention. The BTWC as an agreement was written for States Parties as noted many times in the session this morning. For this reason it is not written a manner that is likely to be clear to scientists and many in civil society. Indeed, with regard to certain aspects of action, the BTWC leaves standards of individual appropriate conduct ill-defined.

- Second, as there is frequently little information in regard to many scientific codes about how they are implemented, whether they are complied with, or even if they are even known to relevant scientists; their effectiveness should not be presumed. Therefore, there would be much benefit in the Sixth Review Conference agreeing a new Confidence Building Measure under which the States Parties exchange information about the adoption and implementation of codes of conduct related to the prohibitions in the Convention. In this regard, I welcome the contribution of the Swiss delegation this morning noting the importance of periodic reviews of the implementation of codes.

- Third, given the close relation between codes and matters of education and awareness raising, it is considered that the States Parties should address in a future inter review conference Meeting of States Parties, prepared again by a Meeting of Experts, the subject of education and outreach activities with the relevant scientific and technical communities. Much could be gained from consideration of the recent approaches to education, outreach and codes of conduct in regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention being taken forward by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Representatives, thank you for your attention.

5 December 2005