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# Disarmament

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Agenda item 1

## Considering Measures to Regulate the Implementation of Biological and Chemical Weapons

### Report of the Chair

#### I. Statement of the problem

1. Biological weapons use biological agents which are infectious particles or toxins to cause illness and death in people and animals. Chemical weapons use chemical agents which can kill or incapacitate people and animals quickly. Some of them are odorless and difficult to detect.<sup>[2]</sup>

2. There is currently no way to verify if countries are complying in certain creations of biological and chemical weapons. Although the Biological Weapons Convention prohibits the production of viruses for hostile purposes, the treaty does not have any formal mechanisms to verify compliance. The Chemical Weapons Convention has extensive verification measures but does not ban the chemical synthesis of viruses because they do not cause harm through toxic effects on living systems.<sup>[3]</sup>

3. Any nations possessing biological or chemical weapons can initiate biological or chemical warfare with relative ease. Any nation with a reasonably advanced pharmaceutical and medical industry can do so, as the only necessity is a team of scientists reasonably well versed in bacteria production and have access to some rudimentary lab equipment. It is inexpensive to use and extremely dangerous. The use of biological agents cost a sum of \$1 to affect 1 square kilometer.

4. The Chemical Weapons Convention states that Each State Party shall adopt the necessary measures to ensure that toxic chemicals and their precursors are only developed, produced, otherwise acquired, retained, transferred, or used within its territory or in any other place under its jurisdiction or control for purposes not prohibited under this Convention meaning that a country may still create chemical weapons within its boundaries as long as the purposes are not prohibited by the convention.<sup>[4]</sup>

5. The possibility of a global nuclear crisis due to a lack of transparency could prove catastrophic. Because countries have a tendency to keep their nuclear actions on a private status and fail to fully account for their nuclear arsenal, other countries are left attempting to interpret these actions. <sup>[2]</sup> The spread of nuclear weapons is an incredible risk to global security, especially to the civilians of developing nations. This massive and immediate spread of both nuclear arms and nuclear ideology jeopardizes the safety of their people to a great extent by leaving the government unable to devise a safety plan of action.

6. Egypt, Iran, Israel, Syria, North Korea, China, and Russia are still suspected of harboring offensive biological weapons programs at various stages of development. <sup>[6]</sup>

## II. History of the Problem

7. Signed by the League of Nations in 1925, the 1925 Geneva Protocol called for the prohibition of the Use in War of biological and chemical weapons. <sup>[5]</sup>

8. The 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) prohibited the development, production, and acquisition of biological weapons. A group of governmental experts (VEREX) was established at the Third Review Conference of the BWC in 1991 to identify and examine potential verification measures from a scientific and technical standpoint. At a Special Conference held in September 1994 in Geneva, the States parties agreed to establish the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the BWC in order to negotiate and develop a legally-binding verification regime for the Convention. Today, the United States and 155 other nations have signed and ratified this landmark treaty. <sup>[6]</sup>

9. According to customary international humanitarian law which is binding on all States and on all parties to an armed conflict, the use of biological and chemical weapons is prohibited. In situations of armed conflict, this absolute prohibition applies to all biological and chemical agents, whether labelled "lethal" or "non-lethal".<sup>[7]</sup>

10. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was adopted by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on 3 September 1992. The CWC allows for the stringent verification of compliance by State Parties. It opened for signature in Paris on January 13, 1993 and entered into force on April 29, 1997. It is the first disarmament agreement negotiated within a multilateral framework that provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under universally applied international control.<sup>[8]</sup>

## III. Potential Solutions

11. Delegates should make it a priority to develop possible methods to ensure compliance with the ban of chemical and biological weapons. Delegates should consider technologies and protocols that your country could offer as a possible solution. For example, consider if your country has an efficient way of regulating its own biological and chemical creations. Also, take into account whether or not your country has technology that can regulate, detect, or in anyway make Biological and Chemical weaponry Disarmament any easier. Delegates should keep in mind cost, the committees ability to implement specific restrictions, and countries willingness to comply with restrictions.

## IV. Position and research tips

12. It is of utmost importance when researching this topic that delegates remain authentic and adhere to their country's position. Some questions to keep into consideration when conducting research include:

- Is your country currently in possession of any biological or chemical weapons?
- Are there currently any facilities in your country that create biological or chemical weapons?
- Is your country for or against regulating the implementation of biological and chemical weapons?
- Has your country been affected in any way by the use of biological or chemical weapons?

#### Useful web sources

- <<http://www.un.org/disarmament/>>
- <<http://www.un.org/>>
- <<http://www.nytimes.com/>>
- <<http://www.armscontrol.org/>>
- <<http://armscontrolcenter.org/>>
- <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>>
- <<http://www.state.gov/>>

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