



**National Defense
Medical College**



**UNIVERSITY OF
BRADFORD**
MAKING KNOWLEDGE WORK

STATEMENT BY
Dr MASAMICHI MINEHATA
ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE MEDICAL COLLEGE
AND
UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD
TO
THE MEETING OF EXPERTS OF
THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT,
PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING
OF BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL)
AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

16 July 2012

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Representatives.

It is a great honour to be invited to make a Statement to the Meeting of Experts of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) which I am doing on behalf of the National Defense Medical College in Japan and the Division of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom with the explicit endorsement of the Vice President of the National Defense Medical College and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Bradford.

Mr. Chairman

One very important topic that will be discussed at this Meeting of Experts is the debate over the publication of papers on the creation of mammalian transmissible H5N1 influenza. Many important issues are discussed in this debate, and many different viewpoints expressed. But one fact is undeniable: that the biosecurity concerns raised by this work were not recognised until a very late stage in the publication process.

Whilst that might be surprising to some it, in fact, follows logically from what a number of States Parties to the Convention noted in their *Working Paper No.20* for the Seventh Review Conference. In their paper they stated:

Life scientists do not often consciously consider the possibility that their specific work could be of relevance to a biological weapons programme or otherwise misused to cause harm to people, animals, or plants or to render critical resources unusable.

That is no doubt why the Meeting of States Parties in 2008 agreed that:

...formal requirements for seminars, modules or courses, including possible mandatory components, in relevant scientific and engineering training programmes and continuing professional education could assist in raising awareness and in implementing the Convention.

As we have reported previously in our contributions to the Seventh Review Conference we have been engaged in developing and assessing the value of seminars, modules or courses to raise awareness among life scientists, such as, for example, our Biosecurity Education Module Resource. Most recently we have:

Developed and implemented a Train-the-Trainer programme with US State Department funding in order to support the Biosecurity Education Module Resource;

Using the Biosecurity Education Module Resources, the National Defense Medical College in Japan commenced an education programme about dual-use issues for life scientists since five years ago. This programme is now applied not only for undergraduate students but also for the scientists in the graduate course. The effort has accelerated the propagation of this educational approach among other universities. Also, our biosecurity endeavours have led to the Science Council of Japan to initiate an effort to produce codes of conduct about dual-use issues for life scientists and technologists;

The University of Bradford has launched an annual international meeting on biosecurity education; the second of these meetings was held last week at the University of Bradford, attracting speakers and delegates from Europe, the UK and

North America. The proceedings of this meeting will be published annually in the new *Yearbook of Biosecurity Education* which will be presented at the Meeting of States Parties each December;

The University of Bradford has also recently developed the National Series – a country-specific set of lectures providing an introduction to biosecurity sponsored by the UK Global Biosecurity Engagement Programme. We have successfully presented the National Series (Ukraine) edition in Kiev in April this year. Further editions will focus on Middle East, North Africa and Former Soviet Union states. (This project will be described in more detail at the side-event on tomorrow morning (Tuesday) at 9:00 am.

However, we recommend strongly that these “bottom-up” approaches need to be complemented and reinforced by States Party action at the national level if any significant change is to be achieved in the level of awareness and education of practicing life scientists around the world.

Consequently, we strongly welcome the inclusion of the two sub-topics on:

(d) voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct by scientists, academia and industry;

(e) education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology.

in the Standing Agenda Item on relevant science and technology. We hope that States Parties will carry out and report back on a wide range of forward-looking initiatives to improve the awareness and education of life and associated scientists and technologists during the annual Meetings of Experts and of States Parties leading up to the Eighth Review Conference in order that best practices can be identified and implemented in many different States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Representatives.