



The Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties

Geneva, 1-5 December 2014

General Statement by H.E. Susanne Rumohr Hækkerup
Ambassador for Disarmament, Nonproliferation and Arms Control

DENMARK

- please check against delivery -

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Government of Denmark, let me congratulate you on your election as Chairman and ensure you of my delegation's full support. Let me also express our appreciation for the excellent work of the Implementation Support Unit.

Mr. Chairman,

[Fully aligning myself with the statement made by the European Union] I would like to make a few additional points. Denmark considers the BTWC essential for preventing the development and use of biological weapons and we are strongly committed to ensuring the important status of our convention in international relations.

Denmark introduced specific biosecurity legislation in 2008. Since then, companies and institutions handling dangerous pathogens and related materials have been required to obtain a license and to implement relevant security



standards. Biosecurity officers at each facility have been appointed and trained by the Danish Centre for Biosecurity and Biopreparedness. In 2015, Denmark will continue its work to ensure that biotechnology is only used in a legitimate context. This, amongst other things, includes efforts to raise awareness on the subject in the scientific community.

Along with preventative biosecurity efforts, it is also necessary to be able to investigate allegations of actual use of biological weapons. It is of vital importance for international peace and security that the international community can quickly and impartially verify or reject such allegations in order to act appropriately.

Therefore, Denmark regards the UN Secretary General's Mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of biological or chemical weapons as an important tool to safeguard international security and we have offered a team of specialists with expertise in biological field investigation. These specialist teams are on 24 hour call and can deploy quickly if requested by the Secretary General.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen the Mechanism, Denmark has offered assistance in relation to developing a so-called "functional sub-unit approach". This approach, suggested by Denmark, is based on national teams that are used to working together and as such the approach can be seen as a supplement to the current concept based on individuals in the roster of the Mechanism. In November 2014, Denmark has participated in an exercise in Germany with the



aim of strengthening the Secretary General's Mechanism, and I would like to thank Germany for a well-conducted event providing important lessons learnt.

Mr. Chairman,

Denmark is of the opinion that global dissemination of best-practices and biosecurity methodologies are important for supporting international security and reducing the threat from biological weapons. In this regard, we participate in the *Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA)*. Denmark is actively engaged in Action Package Three of the GHSA concerning biosecurity and fully supports this international effort to counter infectious diseases, whether they are of a naturally occurring, man-made or accidental nature.

Furthermore, to increase global progress on biosecurity, Denmark is currently cooperating with Kenya. We have established programs to help master students at universities cooperate with laboratories to develop rapid diagnostics thereby minimizing the storage of dangerous pathogens. Furthermore, the project assists local authorities in implementing biosecurity legislation. In the context of the project, a publication on biosecurity best practices will also be issued.

Together with our friends from Kenya, we intend to continue the close collaboration with other partners in the GHSA framework over the coming years, and we find that by strengthening biosecurity in other countries, at the same time we strengthen global security, and as a result also our own national security. We are grateful to Kenya for the very close and fruitful partnership established and we stand fully committed to deepen it further over the coming years.



It is the view of Denmark that each nation has an obligation to improve the transparency of national policies and actions related to the BTWC and biosecurity in general. In this context, the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) are essential. An efficient reporting of CBMs to the United Nations not only demands that countries are willing to contribute to the reporting, it also demands that governments have a precise overview of which dual-use materials and facilities are present in their countries. This again calls for an efficient national biosecurity system that provides a clear national picture of which companies and institutions are working with these agents and materials. Thus, Denmark sees the implementation of national biosecurity systems as an obvious and substantial way of strengthening the BTWC.

Finally, let me highlight our intention of hosting a conference in Copenhagen in the fall of 2015. The aim is to discuss best practices in biosecurity and try to create a catalogue on these practices for use on a global scale. We will also host discussions to increase our common understanding of ways to balance free research with the safe and secure conduct of science that may have a dual-use potential. We hope as many colleagues as possible in the room here today will be ready to engage themselves in this work.

Thank you.