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STATEMENT

By

Mr Knut Langeland
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New York, 15 October 2007

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Mr. Chair,

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention have set fundamental norms on disarmament and non-proliferation of two categories of weapons of mass destruction. They have greatly contributed to our common security.

Norway was highly encouraged by the successful outcome of the Sixth Review Conference of the BTWC. This conference demonstrated that when countries focus on common ground important results can be achieved. We appreciated the constructive way the President of the Review Conference guided our deliberations in December last year.

It is now important to fully implement the Intersessional Programme 2007-2010 adopted at the Review Conference. To this end we welcome the establishment of the new Implementation Support Unit within the Office of Disarmament Affairs. Yet, the prime responsibility to ensure full implementation lies with the States Parties themselves.

It is vital that all States Parties put in place and enforce legislation to ensure full compliance with the obligations of the BTWC. We recognise that countries may need assistance to this end. Norway has provided funding for regional workshops to facilitate implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540.

The threat of bioterrorism makes it even more important to renew our preventive efforts in the field of biosafety and biosecurity. This is an area that Norway will devote particular attention to and where we have allocated resources to assist other States Parties.

Scientific cooperation in life sciences is very much part of the BTWC. The Review Conference last year reconfirmed that many activities are going on in this field. The Intersessional Programme will further enhance such cooperation. The health sector is indeed a priority area for Norwegian development cooperation.

We regret that the BTWC has not achieved the same level of universalisation as the CWC and the NPT. Norway urges countries which have not joined this Convention to do so without delay.

Mr. Chair,

The commemoration of the CWC last month illustrated the impressive results achieved by this Convention. Yet, we must refrain from complacency. We must pursue our endeavours to further strengthen the CWC.
We must continue working to universalise this instrument and promote full national implementation of its obligations. To this end, Norway has contributed to projects in Russia, the Baltic region, Eastern Africa and Central Asia, and we are ready to continue our financial contributions for the promotion of the Convention.

It is imperative that existing stocks of chemical weapons are destroyed within agreed time limits. We encourage countries concerned to do their utmost in this respect.

There is a need to further refine the verification and inspection mechanism of the Convention. Challenge inspections should be used when needed.

We must ensure that the use of riot control agents conforms to the provisions of the Convention and does not have unacceptable humanitarian implications.

All States Parties must put in place and enforce national legislation to achieve full compliance with the Convention.

While the number of States Parties is growing, we have not reached full universality. We urge countries that have not done so to join the Convention without delay.

The Second Review Conference of the CWC next year provides us with a new opportunity to further strengthen the Convention. We must make good use of it.

Mr. Chair,

The 1925 Geneva Protocol remains highly relevant. We urge those countries that do not adhere to this instrument to do so in a timely manner and call upon those states having reservations to their accession to lift them.

Norway would also like to reiterate the importance of engaging the civil society in the promotion and implementation of the BTWC and the CWC.

Thank you, Mr. Chair