

**Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties
to the Convention on the Prohibition of the
Development, Production and Stockpiling
of Bacteriological (Biological) and
Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**Review of the operation of the Convention
as provided for in its Article XII**

Finnish biothreat preparedness

Submitted by Finland

1. The Finnish Strategies to Secure Vital Functions of Society from 2003 and 2006 defined vital functions of society and established targets and development policies that would guide each administrative branch of the government in dealing with its strategic tasks. The strategy called for co-operation between each government sector in combating against new threats towards society. Furthermore, according to the Government Reports on Finnish Security and Defence Policy of 2004 and 2009, terrorism and epidemics caused by infectious diseases were listed as key threats affecting national security.
2. To reflect the understandings of the 2004 Meeting of States Parties to the BWC on strengthening national and international efforts and mechanisms for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases, and based on the domestic resolutions listed above, the Center for Biothreat Preparedness was established in Helsinki in 2005. The Centre, which employs five to seven experts, combines Finnish scientific and laboratory know-how on biological defence, as well as on biothreat assessment and preparedness. The main task of the Centre is to through research and international collaboration to endorse provision against biological threats, and capabilities to evaluate biological threats. Furthermore, the Centre is a collaborative link between Finnish authorities and experts in preparedness against biological threats.
3. The Centre for Biothreat Preparedness is composed of two Units; the Biological Defence Unit of the Finnish Defence Forces, and the Biological Threat Unit of the National Institute for Health and Welfare (NIHW). The Centre works in close contact with the Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology of the NIHW and with the CB-Defence and Environmental Health Centre of the Centre for Military Medicine. Scientific work is carried out in collaboration with domestic and international partners from the academic community, as well as from industry. Biological safety laboratory facilities, up to level 3 are available at the NIHW for handling of biological agents.
4. Based on the second review conference in 1986, States Parties to the BWC agreed to introduce Confidence Building Measures (CBM) to the convention. Finland has continuously reported these activities since 1987, and currently drafting of these reports is among the tasks of the Centre for Biothreat Preparedness.

5. The Finnish Defence Forces has been developing its Territorial and Operational CBRN Defence Units for national defence, and a Diagnostic Deployable CBRN Laboratory has been established for the use of international tasks, as well as for national duties. The development of the Deployable CBRN Laboratory was lead by Army Command in cooperation with the Defence Forces Technical Research Centre and the Centre for Biothreat Preparedness, together with the Centre for Military Medicine. The Centre for Biothreat Preparedness was in charge of establishing the biosafety and microbial identification requirements of the laboratory.

6. The Finnish Deployable CBRN Laboratory has passed NATO NEL 2 –level (Combat Readiness Evaluation) evaluation. For the year 2012 (a period of 12 months), Finland offers this Deployable CBRN Laboratory to the Response Forces Pool of the NRF. In addition to rapid field detection, this laboratory may be used for collection of forensic evidence related to a possible case of an alleged use of biological agents.
