

Second Meeting
Geneva, 6-10 December 2004

Meeting of Experts
Geneva, 19-30 July 2004
Items 5 and 6 of the agenda

**Enhancing national capabilities for responding to and mitigating of
effects of bioterrorism and related diseases**

Submitted by Italy

1. In Italy, the Prime Minister is responsible for national security. To fulfil the requirement of the new threat coming from terrorism he has established, in March 2002, the “Committee for the risk assessment related to the terroristic use of Nuclear, Radiological, Chemical and Biological technologies”.
2. The assignment of the Committee is to elaborate and update an overview on the proliferation and use of biological agents that could be potentially used as means of aggression, in order to identify and address the demands and priorities of security in the particular subject.
3. The Committee, chaired by a Secretary-General, is composed of representatives of Ministry of Defence, Health, Interior, Civil Protection and Intelligence. In relation to specific items, it is possible to invite experts coming from other Administrations. To achieve its objectives, the Committee can also acquire any instrumental or auxiliary element of interest from public Administrations.
4. The Committee’s work aims to support the relevant authorities in establishing procedures and methodologies to improve collaboration between them and the other relevant institutional actors involved in strategic threat assessment, with a view to preventing or mitigating a potential attack through the setting of threat and vulnerability priorities.
5. The Committee has evaluated the risk taking into consideration the possibilities, abilities and intentions of individuals or groups that could pursue terrorist finalities. For the evaluation of the biological risk the Committee has decided to adopt the list of the biological agents of the CDC

(Atlanta) and has established a series of nine “objective” criteria, every one divided in some parameters. The aforementioned parameters have been collegially appraised, by a “technical sub-Committee”, attributing them numerical values that have been multiplied for a weighting factor previously settled for each criterion.

6. Among the adopted criteria: the availability of the biological agent, manageability, production, dissemination, transmissibility, illness, lethality, health care resources and impact.

7. The average of the values related to the objective criteria has been subsequently mediated with that elaborated by the intelligence. With this system it has been possible to achieve a ranked assessment in terms of numerical values for each considered biological agent. Therefore some priorities, in terms of biological agents, have been pointed out to the various Administrations as the most appropriate and urgent for the descending emergency planning.

8. The Committee, periodically, or on request of its Members, reviews its evaluations on the light of new related events or intelligence information.
