

## 2. Biological Weapons

review conference in 1986, a number of voluntary measures designed to strengthen the Convention were developed. The conference strengthened and reaffirmed the consultative process established at the first review conference which gave states a right to request a consultative meeting of experts to discuss compliance concerns. Other measures included establishing annual exchanges of information on high-containment research facilities, and on unusual outbreaks of infectious diseases.

The 1991 review built on the measures and proposals of the first two review conferences. Confidence-building measures developed at earlier reviews were strengthened by making their requirements clearer, and new measures were added. The changes include the following:

- the previous commitment to exchange information on high-containment facilities now also includes a requirement to provide detailed information on national research programmes and facilities;
- the definition of what constitutes an unusual outbreak of infectious diseases was strengthened by making clear what constituted an "unusual" outbreak;
- states are now required to declare: 1) the national legislation and regulations they have enacted to implement the convention's provisions; 2) the controls they impose on exports which may contribute to proliferation; and 3) the controls applied on imports of pathogenic micro-organisms;
- another new measure requires states to report on all of their biological and toxin weapons programmes, offensive and defensive, since 1 January 1946;
- for the first time there is now a requirement that states annually declare government and non-governmental facilities that produce vaccines.

There was an active debate at the review conference on establishing verification provisions. The US was loath to discuss any verification measures or even to consider the possibility of negotiating such measures. In the end, however, the US did agree to the creation of an Ad Hoc Group of Experts which would meet to discuss the technical feasibility of verification measures. The Group held its first meeting in March 1992.

In an effort to encourage a greater exchange of information relating to peaceful uses of biotechnology, especially with developing countries, the review conference called for greater international cooperation and welcomed efforts to develop an international centre for vaccine development. In ongoing efforts to strengthen the convention, states will continue to work on developing an institutional base for the convention, verification measures and on increasing the number of signatories to the convention.