

5.0 CONCLUSION:

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

Toxins and bioregulators, it is often suggested, are in an ambiguous position with respect to chemical and biological weapons. Some people consider toxins and bioregulators to be biological agents, while others consider them to be chemical agents. Accordingly, there is a view that toxins and bioregulators should be included not only in the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention but also in the proposed Chemical Weapons Convention, to ensure that there not be any perceived gaps in the scope of the prohibition. The advances in technology related to novel toxins and bioregulators have contributed to such concerns. Biologically active peptides could require further consideration in the years ahead.

However, if the scope of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is properly interpreted to include bioregulators (such as biologically active peptides) and novel toxins, any verification of activities relating to these would not be a simple matter. Pharmaceutical plants around the world have incorporated safety provisions akin to those which were once unique to biological weapon production facilities, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between permitted and prohibited activities. Verification of a biological or toxin weapon production capability would require a high degree of intrusion. In other words, all