

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada work to strengthen international efforts to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons and missile systems and to ensure adequate funding for verification purposes.

Response

As part of the Government's comprehensive approach to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, Canada is active in a wide variety of international institutions and settings, working not only to prevent the further spread of chemical and biological weapons and missiles, but also to roll back programs that now exist.

In the chemical weapons domain, Canada continues to encourage broad adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as the best means of addressing the threat posed by chemical weapons. While adherence to the Convention is very widespread (there are currently 121 States Parties), problem areas remain. Of greatest concern is the Middle East, where Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq have not become States Parties. The Government recognises that this region poses particular problems, but is promoting further ratification of the CWC as an important way to introduce stability into the region.

An active supporter of a resolution on universality in the 3rd Conference of States Parties, Canada has given advice and assistance to a number of countries on how to implement and administer the Convention domestically, including sharing draft legislation and declaration software, and providing experts on the Convention and on export and import controls for regional and national seminars. The Government will continue these activities in order to encourage adherence to the Convention, particularly by developing countries.

The Government is currently in the process of developing domestic regulations to ensure the entry into force of Canadian legislation passed to implement the CWC.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) entered into force in 1975 and has been ratified by 138 states. Unlike the CWC, the BTWC does not yet include verification provisions. Attempts have been made to address this shortcoming through politically-binding confidence-building measures submitted annually to the United Nations and since 1994, through the on-going negotiation of a Compliance Protocol to supplement the Convention.

Canada is playing an active role in the ongoing negotiations of a Compliance Protocol, including working with states from north and south. The Protocol will provide verification and compliance mechanisms to reduce the threat posed by covert biological weapons programs, without imposing an unacceptable burden on industry. Facilities engaged in defence against biological weapons, and those that could be used to produce biological