



**Remarks by H.E. Aad BIESEBROEK, EU Ambassador to Trinidad and  
Tobago**

**Regional Caribbean Workshop to Promote Universality and  
Implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and  
Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)**

**Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago**

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2019.**

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The Honourable Senator Wade Mark, Chairperson of PGA National Group

Honourable Rodney Charles, Member of Parliament

Honourable Members of Parliament

H.E. Ms. Carla Hogan Rufelds, High Commissioner of Canada

H.E. Mr. Tim Stew, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to today's workshop and say a few words on the new EU Council Decision in support of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which was adopted by EU Ministers in January.

The EU has three policy objectives: To work towards the bans on biological and chemical weapons being declared universally binding rules of international law; To pursue an international agreement on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; And to assist third countries in the fulfilment of their obligations under multilateral conventions and regimes.

Particular emphasis is placed on a policy of reinforcing compliance with the multilateral treaty regime; make use of and seek improvements to existing

verification mechanisms and systems; strengthening export control policies and practices within its borders and beyond, in coordination with partners; and promote further consideration of security assurances.

Since 2006, the EU has provided dedicated funding to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit. The EU has supported legislative assistance, bio risk management, and export control in third countries. The ISU has developed an electronic facility increasing the rate of annual submissions of Confidence-Building Measures by States Parties. More than 30 workshops have been organized in different parts of the world to promote universalization, national implementation, and submission of Confidence-Building Measures. 27 new States have acceded to the Convention.

Other EU instruments include the EU Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear Centres of Excellence Initiative that provides assistance to more than 60 countries in 8 regions to mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks, with the budget of 250 million Euros for 2010-20.

EU funding has been used for example for organizing regional workshops as well for providing expert assistance in strengthening national legislation, improving biosecurity in laboratories and planning emergency response to possible bio threats.

On Monday, 18 March, the EU Delegation to the UN in Geneva, together with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, organised a launch event for the new EU Council Decision in support of the Convention that was adopted by EU Ministers in January 2019.

At the opening of the event, my colleague Ambassador Walter Stevens, Head of the EU Delegation to the UN in Geneva, stated the following: "***The threat of proliferation of biological and toxin weapons remains real in light of rapid advancements in life sciences. We must remain vigilant and ensure that our governance structures – legislation, administration, judicial systems, law enforcement – are up to date to minimize the risk of malicious use of pathogens or toxins and that we are well prepared and in a position to respond quickly to the challenges when needed.***"

Examples of some of the projects to be supported include:

- Promotion of the universal adherence to the Convention by encouraging States that are not party to the Convention to better understand the benefits of joining and getting more involved in meetings and other activities;
- Capacity development in support of implementation - Under this project, UNODA will seek to establish active cooperation with Member States, experts and national institutions able to provide high-quality and relevant assistance;
- Fostering biosecurity networks in the Global South - This aims to provide capacity-development opportunities for young policymakers, scientists and academics from the Global South engaged in fields related to the Convention;
- Mobilising States Parties towards active participation in the Ninth Review Conference by organising four regional or sub-regional workshops and by offering opportunities to reflect on and discuss key topics of the 2018-2020 inter-sessional programme;
- Enhance the capacity of selected States Parties to prevent and respond to a biological weapons attack. Training in assistance and protection will be provided by experts from Member States and from relevant international organisations.

Ambassador Stevens also indicated that *"This is essentially a national responsibility, but international cooperation and assistance can play a useful role in building the necessary capacities for national implementation of the Convention."*

Ladies and gentlemen,

I do hope that the EU-funded assistance activities are making a difference on the ground and will be helping countries to develop their capacities against the threat of proliferation of biological weapons by States or non-States actors.

I also hope that this workshop will persuade all CARICOM member states to ratify and implement this Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention within their domestic law.

Concluding, I wish to thank Parliamentarians for Global Action and Canada for organising the workshop, the speakers for sharing their knowledge and experience and I extend my best wishes for a productive workshop.