

**CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION
AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN
WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

At the twenty-first session of the General Assembly, in 1966, Hungary submitted a draft resolution in the First Committee of the Assembly (A/C.1/L.374) on the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons. The resolution sought that the Assembly, guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and contemporary international law, and considering that weapons of mass destruction constituted a danger for all mankind, would, *inter alia*: demand strict and absolute compliance by all States with the principles and norms established by the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925 for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare; condemn any actions aimed at the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons; and declare that the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons for the purpose of destroying human beings and the means of their existence constituted an international crime. Following amendments introduced by several Member States, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of its First Committee (A/6529), adopted resolution 2162 B (XXI) on 5 December 1966, by which it noted, *inter alia*, that the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (“the ENDC”) had the task of seeking an agreement on the cessation of the development and production of chemical and bacteriological weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the elimination of such weapons from national arsenals.

Discussion on updating the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925 continued within the framework of the ENDC in 1968. The ENDC agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that the Secretary-General appoint a group of experts to study the effects of the possible use of bacteriological means of warfare. A number of other proposals were also made concerning bacteriological weapons (Report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, 16 July to 28 August 1968, A/7189).

At its twenty-third session, in 1968, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2454 A (XXIII) of 20 December 1968, on the recommendation of its First Committee, by which it requested, *inter alia*, the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the various aspects of the problem of chemical, bacteriological and other biological weapons, in accordance with paragraph 26 of the report of the ENDC. It further requested this report to be transmitted to the ENDC, the Security Council and the General Assembly in time to permit its consideration at the Assembly’s twenty-fourth session.

The report of the Secretary-General was transmitted to these bodies on 1 July 1969 (A/7575/Rev.1). The experts who had prepared the report at the Secretary-General’s request unanimously concluded that the prospects for general and complete disarmament would brighten if the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) agents were to end and if they were eliminated from all military arsenals. The Secretary-General urged Member States, *inter alia*, to reach agreement in order to meet the recommendations in the report.

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (“the CCD”) (the successor to the ENDC) discussed the report of the Secretary-General as part of its 1969 session, from 10 March to 30 October. The United Kingdom submitted a draft convention for the prohibition of biological methods of warfare to the CCD on 10 July 1969 (ENDC/255). After discussion within the CCD, it was decided that the CCD would continue to discuss the topic in its proceeding sessions (Report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, 10 March to 30 October 1969, A/7741).

During the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1969, a further draft convention was submitted by Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/7655). After discussions within the First Committee, a common text was submitted. On the recommendation of its First Committee (A/7890), the General Assembly adopted resolution 2603 B (XXIV) of 16 December 1969, by which it acknowledged, *inter alia*, the report of the Secretary-General, as well as the two proposals for a draft convention. Moreover, it requested the CCD to give urgent consideration to reaching an agreement on the prohibitions and other measures referred to in the two draft conventions and other relevant proposals.

The CCD continued its work on the topic, in 1970, with a view to achieving progress on all aspects of the problem. Several additional proposals and amendments to the two draft conventions were proposed. Discussions specifically focused on the question of whether to treat chemical and bacteriological weapons jointly or separately (Report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, 17 February to 3 September 1970, A/8059).

At the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in 1970, discussion in the First Committee continued along similar lines to that which occurred in the CCD (A/8179). The General Assembly, on the recommendation of its First Committee, adopted resolution 2662 (XXV) on 7 December 1970, by which it requested, *inter alia*, the CCD to continue its consideration of the problem of chemical and bacteriological (biological) methods of warfare at its next session, and to submit a report on the results achieved to the Assembly at its twenty-sixth session.

The CCD continued discussion on the topic in 1971. After much deliberation and debate on whether to consider chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons separately, two separate but identical draft conventions were submitted that focused exclusively on bacteriological weapons, it having been accepted that an agreement on chemical weapons would require further deliberations. The draft convention was annexed to the CCD report delivered to the General Assembly as requested (A/8457).

At the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly, in 1971, the First Committee examined the draft convention proposed by the CCD. In the course of the debate, amendments and revisions to the draft convention were made. A revised version of the draft convention was adopted by the First Committee and recommended to the General Assembly (Report of the First Committee to the General Assembly, A/8574). On this recommendation, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2826 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction attached as an annex. The Assembly requested the depository Governments (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) to open the convention for signature and ratification at the earliest possible date.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction was opened for signature on 10 April 1972 and entered into force on 26 March 1975, after the ratification of the instrument by twenty-two Governments, including the three depository Governments, pursuant to its article XIV, paragraph 3.