

**CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT,  
PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS  
AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

The negotiations which lead to the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction took place in the General Assembly or, at the Assembly's request, within the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee and its successors—the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament from 1969 to 1978, the Committee on Disarmament from 1979 to 1983, and the Conference on Disarmament from 1984 onwards.

In resolution 2162 B (XXI) of 5 December 1966, which called for the strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed in Geneva on 17 June 1925 (the 1925 Geneva Protocol), the General Assembly noted that the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament had the task of seeking an agreement on the cessation of the development and production of chemical and bacteriological weapons and on their elimination, as part of its consideration of the question of general and complete disarmament.

Following the discussion of the question of chemical and bacteriological weapons by the Eighteen-Nation Committee in 1968, the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee recommended, in its report for 1968, that the Secretary-General should appoint a group of experts to study the effects of the possible use of such weapons (A/7189-DC/231), a recommendation the Secretary-General welcomed in the introduction to his annual report (A/7201). By resolution 2454 A (XXIII) of 20 December 1968, the General Assembly accordingly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons with the assistance of qualified consultant experts and called upon Governments, national and international scientific institutions and organizations to cooperate.

On 1 July 1969, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2454 A (XXIII), the Secretary-General transmitted the report prepared by consultant experts on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, as well as to the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/7575/Rev.1 and Corr.1-S/9292/Rev.1 and Corr.1). The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee (renamed "Conference of the Committee on Disarmament" (CCD) on 26 August 1969, following the enlargement of the Committee to 26 members) discussed the report at its 1969 session and welcomed it as a needed basis for further consideration of the question. Various proposals for possible action were placed before the Committee, including a draft convention for the prohibition of biological methods of warfare submitted by the United Kingdom (ENDC/255 and Rev.1 (A/7741, pp. 29-32)), suggesting that the issues of bacteriological (biological) weapons and chemical weapons should be dealt with in separate conventions. The Committee however decided to continue its work on both issues and reported to the General Assembly accordingly (A/7741 (DC/232)). At the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1969, the First Committee held a separate discussion on the question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons for the first time. It had before it the report of the CCD (which included the draft convention submitted by the United Kingdom), a draft convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of both chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and on their

destruction introduced by nine Member States and the report of the Secretary-General. On 16 December 1969, following the recommendation of the First Committee (A/7890), the General Assembly adopted resolution 2603 B (XXIV) by which it, *inter alia*, called anew for strict observance of the principles and objectives of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, took note of both draft conventions and requested the CCD to give urgent consideration to reaching agreement on the prohibitions and others measures referred to in the two draft conventions.

At the 1970 session of the CCD, discussions focused mainly on the two abovementioned draft conventions and on the question of whether both chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons should be dealt with together or separately (A/8059 (DC/233)). At the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the First Committee had before it a report of the CCD (A/8059 (DC/233)) and the two draft conventions. Upon recommendation of the First Committee (A/8179), the General Assembly adopted resolution 2662 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, by which it called again for the strict observance of the principles and objectives of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, took note of the various draft conventions and proposals and commended, among other things, that both chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons should continue to be dealt with together, as suggested in a joint memorandum submitted to the CCD by 12 Member States (CCD/310 (A/8059, Annex C, section 39)). It further requested the CCD to continue its consideration of the question and to report to the Assembly in 1971.

In 1971, the members of the CCD reached a consensus on a draft convention on bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons. The General Assembly commended the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (Convention on Bacteriological Weapons) by its resolution 2826 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971. The discussion on the prohibition of chemical weapons nevertheless continued in the CCD (A/8457 (DC/234)) and in the First Committee (A/8574). Upon recommendation of the First Committee, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2827 A (XXVI) on 16 December 1971, by which it requested the CCD to continue, as a matter of priority, its negotiations on the issue of chemical weapons and noted with satisfaction that the Convention on Bacteriological Weapons contained an undertaking to negotiate in good faith to reach an effective prohibition of chemical weapons. In its resolution 2827 B (XXVI) of the same day, the General Assembly urged all States to undertake, pending agreement on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons and their destruction, to refrain from any further development, production or stockpiling.

The discussions on the issue of chemical weapons continued at the CCD and in the General Assembly between 1972 and 1978, the General Assembly reiterating every year its request that the Conference continue the negotiations as a matter of high priority (see resolutions 2933 (XXVII) of 29 November 1972, 3077 (XXVIII) of 6 December 1973, 3256 (XXIX) of 9 December 1974, 3465 (XXX) of 11 December 1975, 31/65 of 10 December 1976 and 32/77 of 12 December 1977).

In 1978, at its tenth special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly established a Disarmament Commission, a deliberative body and subsidiary organ of the Assembly composed of all Member States and a successor of the Disarmament Commission originally established in 1952. It was decided that the Disarmament Commission should, *inter alia*, consider the elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament, to be submitted to the Assembly and, through it, to a new Committee on Disarmament, succeeding to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament as the negotiating body. It was further agreed that the Committee on

Disarmament would be open to all nuclear-weapon States, and 32 to 35 other States and that membership would be reviewed at intervals. (See resolution S-10/2 of 30 June 1978).

The Committee on Disarmament devoted a major part of its deliberations in 1979 to the elaboration of an agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons. While no agreement was reached, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) submitted a joint report on their bilateral negotiations on the issue, assuring that they would exert their best efforts to complete the negotiations and present a joint initiative as soon as possible (see A/34/27 and Corr.1). On 11 December 1979, following the discussion of the issue in the First Committee, the General Assembly adopted resolution 34/72, by which it expressed regret that no agreement had been elaborated and urged the Committee on Disarmament to undertake negotiations on such an agreement at the beginning of its next session as a matter of high priority.

A Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Bacteriological Weapons was held in March 1980. In the final declaration of the Conference, which was welcomed by the General Assembly (resolution 35/144 A of 12 December 1980), the parties reaffirmed their obligation to continue negotiations towards early agreement on complete, effective and adequately verifiable measures for banning and destroying chemical weapons.

On 17 March 1980, the Committee on Disarmament established an *Ad Hoc* Working Group for the duration of its 1980 session, to examine and define issues to be dealt with in the negotiations on a chemical weapons convention (see A/35/27). (The Working Group was re-established every year thereafter until the adoption of the Convention in 1992 and renamed “*Ad Hoc* Committee on Chemical Weapons” in 1984 when the Conference on Disarmament replaced the Committee on Disarmament.) The Committee also held discussions, both in plenary and informal meetings, on issues relating to the prohibition of chemical weapons. On 8 July 1980, the United States introduced, also on behalf of the USSR, a joint progress report on their bilateral negotiations on the issue. On 9 August 1980, the Committee adopted the working group’s report and included it in its report to the General Assembly (A/35/27). Following the discussion of the issue in the First Committee, and upon its recommendations, the General Assembly, again, urged the Committee on Disarmament to continue the negotiations as a matter of high priority (resolution 35/144 B).

The negotiations continued in the Committee on Disarmament during 1981, most of the work being conducted in the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Chemical Weapons. In its report to the Committee, which was incorporated to the Committee’s report to the General Assembly (A/36/27), the Working Group recommended that it be re-established in 1982 with a revised mandate that would enable it to resolve differences. On 9 December 1981, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/96 A requesting the Committee on Disarmament to do so and to continue the negotiations as a matter of high priority. By resolution 36/96 B, it further called on the United States and the USSR to resume their bilateral negotiations, which had been suspended in 1980, at the earliest possible date and called on all States to refrain from production and deployment of binary and other new types of chemical weapons.

The Committee on Disarmament (to be known as the “Conference on Disarmament” as of its 1984 annual session) continued to devote much of its time to the preparation of a draft convention to prohibit chemical weapons between 1982 and 1988, via its *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Chemical Weapons (*Ad Hoc* Committee on Chemical Weapons from 1984 onwards), which was mandated as of 1982 to elaborate a convention

so as to enable the Committee to achieve agreement at the earliest date. In the same period, the General Assembly consistently expressed its regret and concern that a convention had not been finalized and urged the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its negotiations throughout this period (see resolutions 37/98 B of 13 December 1982, 38/187 B of 20 December 1983, 39/65 C of 12 December 1984, 40/92 B of 12 December 1985, 41/58 D of 3 December 1986, 42/37 A of 30 November 1987 and 43/74 C of 7 December 1988). Starting from 1984, several working groups were established by the *Ad Hoc* Committee every year to deal with specific aspects of the convention (A/39/27) and from 1985 onwards, consultations were also held during the intersessional periods (A/40/27).

The United States and the USSR resumed their bilateral negotiations in 1985. They agreed to accelerate efforts to conclude an effective and verifiable international convention on the general and complete prohibition of chemical weapons (A/40/1070), a commitment they reiterated in 1987 (A/43/58).

At the General Assembly's forty-third session, in 1988, the United States proposed the convening of a conference to consider actions to uphold the authority and to "reverse the serious erosion" of the 1925 Geneva Protocol (A/43/PV.4). France offered to host the conference, which later took place in Paris from 7 to 11 January 1989. The General Assembly, by resolutions 43/74 A and C of 7 December 1988, welcomed this offer by France and, once again, urged the Conference to pursue its negotiations as a matter of continuing urgency.

The Final Declaration of the Conference of States Parties to the 1925 Geneva (the Paris Conference), which the General Assembly welcomed in resolutions 44/115 A and B of 15 December 1989, reaffirmed the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and called on the Conference on Disarmament to redouble its efforts to conclude a convention prohibiting chemical weapons (A/44/88). The General Assembly further requested the Conference on Disarmament to use the political momentum generated by the Paris Conference and its recognition that the prohibition of chemical weapons is of universal concern and interest, to achieve the conclusion of such a convention at the earliest possible date.

At the initiative of the Government of Australia, a Government-Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons was convened from 18 to 22 September in Canberra (A/C.1/44/4), at which the Governments represented reaffirmed their commitment to conclude and implement a convention at the earliest date and the representatives of the chemical industry adopted a statement by which they declared their commitment to co-operate with Governments to that end. The General Assembly welcomed both outcomes in resolution 44/115 A of 15 December 1989.

On 23 September 1989, the United States and the USSR issued a joint statement on chemical weapons reaffirming again their commitment to pursue aggressively the prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of all stockpiles of such weapons (A/C.1/44/2); another joint statement indicating their determination to reach an agreement to this effect was issued on 10 February 1990 (CD/973 and 974). At a summit meeting in Washington on 1 June of the same year, the two States reaffirmed this commitment and signed an agreement whereby they committed themselves, *inter alia*, to cooperate regarding technologies for the safe and efficient destruction of chemical weapons, to abstain from producing such weapons and to reduce the stockpiles already existing (CD/1000 and 1001).

Re-established in 1990, the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Chemical Weapons was mandated “to continue the full and complete process of negotiations, developing and working out the convention [...] with a view to giving the Conference a possibility to achieve an agreement as soon as possible” (A/45/27). As in previous years, the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee was adopted by the Conference and incorporated in its own report to the General Assembly (A/45/27). By resolution 45/57 A of 4 December 1990, the General Assembly, while noting the progress made, expressed its regret and concern that a convention had not yet been concluded and strongly urged the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its efforts.

The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Chemical Weapons was re-established in 1991 with the same mandate as in 1991, but on 20 June 1991, the Conference on Disarmament decided to amend it to include the “use of chemical weapons” in the scope of the prohibition and make explicit its commitment to strive to achieve a final agreement on the convention by 1992 (A/46/27). By resolution 46/35 C of 6 December 1991, the General Assembly commended this decision of the Conference to “intensify further the negotiations on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction with the view to striving to achieve a final agreement no a convention by 1992” and strongly urged the Conference, as a matter of the highest priority, to resolve outstanding issues in the forthcoming months, to enable a final agreement to be achieved during the Conference’s 1992 session.

The *Ad Hoc* Committee held 32 meetings between 24 January and 26 August 1992 under the abovementioned mandate. On 3 September 1992, the Conference on Disarmament adopted the report of the Committee, together with its appendix containing the text of the draft convention, as well as a text on the establishment of a preparatory commission for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and agreed by consensus to transmit the draft convention to the General Assembly (A/47/27). On the recommendation of the First Committee (A/47/690), the General Assembly commended the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, as contained in the report of the Conference, by resolution 47/39 of 30 November 1992. It further requested the Secretary General to open it for signature in Paris on 13 January 1993.