

State Department reports progress on bioweapons control

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US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton delivers a policy statement during the Seventh Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons, at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva on December 7.

Progress has been made in protecting against the threat of biological weapons, the State Department said Friday at the end of global talks which agreed to boost moves to thwart their spread.

"We will continue to face new and emerging biological threats that will require the coordinated and connected efforts of a broad range of domestic and international partners," the department said in a statement.

"As we take action to counter these threats, we will work together to

advance our own health security and provide for the improved condition of all humanity."

The 165 signatories to the biological and toxin weapons convention agreed to "a multinational work program for the next five years that promises to revitalize global efforts to reduce biological threats."

The convention, which came into force in 1975, bans the development, manufacture or stockpiling of [biological weapons](#).

US Secretary of State [Hillary Clinton](#), who opened the conference in Geneva on December 7, had sought to rally international efforts against the threat of a biological attack, saying the [warning signs](#) were "too serious to ignore."

She told the three-week conference that the risk of a bio-weapons attack was "both a serious national security challenge and a foreign policy priority."

Clinton urged more transparency from member states to boost confidence that signatories were living up to their obligations under the 1975 treaty, which could be achieved through a review of the annual reporting system.

The conference agreed to review the treaty's annual [reporting system](#) and over the next five years will build ways of dealing with [disease outbreaks](#) as well as setting up a database to transfer information and calls for help.

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