A BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE VII

1. The primary objective of Article VII is to provide or support assistance to a State Party that has been exposed as to danger a result of a violation of the Convention. Therefore, the purpose of the assistance provided in terms of this Article should be humanitarian in nature.

2. South Africa attaches great importance to Article VII and it was for this reason that a paper was drafted proposing a set of voluntary guidelines to assist a State Party when submitting a request/application for assistance. South Africa believes that the guidelines would assist with the implementation and operationalisation of this Article.

3. The guidelines are voluntary and it is the prerogative of the requesting State Party to decide whether or not to use the guidelines and provide additional information with the request for assistance. The information accompanying the request for assistance would be useful to States Parties in their consideration and preparation to provide assistance, however such information should not be a prerequisite for the provision of such assistance.

4. The following information could be useful when submitting a request for assistance:

   (a) Name of the State Party.
   (b) National Point of Contact of State Party.
   (c) Date and place of first reported case. If there was a related event, a description of the event. To the extent possible, the date and time, when the alleged event(s) took place and/or became apparent to the requesting State Party and, if possible, the duration of the alleged event(s).
   (d) Severity of the event. Number of cases and the number of fatalities, if any.
   (e) Symptoms and signs – diagnosis if possible. Information on the initial treatment and the preliminary results of the treatment of the disease.
   (f) A description of the area involved.
   (g) All available epidemiological information.
   (h) Actions taken to manage the outbreak.
   (i) International organisations already involved in the provision of assistance.
(j) States already involved in the provision of assistance.
(k) Indications of why the outbreak is considered to be the result of a biological attack.
(l) Characteristics of the agent involved, if available.
(m) Types and scope of assistance required.
(n) Indication of any investigations conducted or being conducted.
(o) Contact details for coordination of assistance if different from National Point of Contact.
(p) Licensing requirements for health care personnel and measures to address such requirements.
(q) Immigration processes for personnel and equipment for the provision of assistance.

5. It is proposed that a set of voluntary guidelines as above be developed and maintained at the ISU to aid a State Party, if required for the application for, and implementation of assistance in case of alleged use of biological weapons against it.