MEETING BIO-SECURITY CHALLENGES: DEVELOPMENT OF A CANADIAN FEDERAL INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATIVE MODEL

Prepared by Canada

Background

1. The events of September 11, 2001 triggered the Government of Canada to designate public safety and security as one of its top priorities. The federal budget of 2002 dedicated $7.7 billion to public security. Of that amount, more than half a billion dollars was allocated to strengthen Canada’s preparedness to prevent and respond to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats inclusive of funding for equipment and training for first responders. While there is no specific threat of a CBRN attack against Canada and the overall threat is judged to be low, because the consequences of a CBRN incident could be devastating, Canada is enhancing its response capabilities. CBRN weapons cover a broad spectrum of agents and present a unique challenge. For example, biological weapons could be covertly deployed, create no apparent crime scene, and remain undetected for several days or longer.

2. A comprehensive strategy to deal with CBRN incidents has been evolved over the past several months. Basic elements of this strategy are embodied in a range of proactive measures including domestic and international collaboration, security and intelligence, surveillance, and training. It has been acknowledged that research and development (R&D) is a driver to provide the necessary tools to facilitate better public safety and security and further, that deficiency gaps existed in federal science and technology (S&T) programs to achieve that end. Accordingly, science and technology-based departments of the Government of Canada developed a collaborative model to deal with deficiency gaps inclusive of first responder training. Owing to its long standing work in chemical, biological and radiological defence, Defence R&D Canada, an autonomous agency within the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND), was designated the lead federal entity.

3. Two models to enhance national security have been developed and implemented over the past year: the Canadian Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Research and Technology Initiative (CRTI) and the Canadian CBRN Training Program.
4. **CRTI** is a $170 million, 5 year program that:

- establishes an authority for the coordination of federal S&T in CBRN counter-terrorism and the funding for a federal laboratory response network.
- clarifies the roles and mandates of Federal Departments and Agencies as they pertain to the operational and S&T aspects of CBRN disaster response.
- creates clusters of federal laboratories as elements of a federal laboratory response network that will build S&T capacity to address the highest risk terrorist attack scenarios.
- creates a fund to build capability in critical areas, particularly those identified in the scenarios that address biological and radiological attack.
- accelerates technology into the hands of the First Responders community and other operational authorities.
- provides funds to those areas where national S&T capacity is deficient owing to obsolete equipment, dated facilities and inadequate scientific teams.

5. **CRTI** is governed by an inter-departmental Steering Committee at the Assistant Deputy Minister level and chaired by ADM(S&T). The CRTI comprises a collection of projects selected via an annual competitive process, which employs a quality and relevance review coordinated by the CRTI Secretariat. Each project has a federal lead, which assigns a Project Manager who is responsive to the Director/CRTI Secretariat. At least two federal departments/agencies must be participants in each project. Selection criteria differ depending on the category of project and the selection criteria are weighted in favor partnering and leverage. Other levels of government, academia or industry are participants. It is anticipated that the funding will be renewed in 5 year time allotments.

6. **CBRN Training** is a $59 million, 5 year program to strengthen national consequence management response capability for CBRN terrorist incidents. Canadian provinces and territories have overall responsibility for managing the consequences of CBRN terrorist incidents, assisted, if necessary and as requested, by the federal government. While first responder training for CBRN incidents is an area of shared responsibility, provinces and territories have called for a strong leadership role on the part of the federal government in the development of national standards and guidelines for CBRN training, as well as the provision of sustained funding support for training programs.

7. Overall responsibility for the Canadian CBRN Training Program resides with and is led by the Office for Critical Infrastructure and Emergency Preparedness (OCIPEP), which in turn reports to the Minister of National Defence. Training content and associated infrastructure for its delivery is the responsibility of a steering committee with representatives from the following government departments:

- Defence R&D Canada (DRDC)
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- Health Canada
- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC)
- Solicitor General of Canada
Operating Principles

8. Training programs are targeted on meeting first responder needs at the local level (i.e., police, fire, emergency measures services, medical). They represent new or enhanced programs, financed with new resources, targeted at addressing priority needs.

9. Priority in the identification and development of training programs has been placed on those areas that focus on protecting public health and security, and saving lives.

10. Training is integrated, coordinated and harmonised among and between government departments to ensure those in the best position will deliver the training, while eliminating duplication and ensuring maximum coverage.

11. The federal government plays a leadership role by establishing and delivering CBRN training programs, including development of core content and training standards.

12. Strong linkages have been established with other initiatives underway to strengthen the overall national CBRN response capacity. For example, this training initiative will link with the CRTI to ensure that first responder training is informed by the most up-to-date developments in science and technology. It is anticipated that CBRN Training will be indefinitely sustained since there is no ‘sunset’ clause on this federal budget item.