

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

Geneva, 10-14 December 2012

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To the Permanent Representatives in Geneva of the
States Parties and Signatories to the Convention on the Prohibition
of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological
(Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction

27 February 2012

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION: MEETINGS IN 2012

Excellency,

I am pleased to write to you in my capacity as Chairman of the 2012 meetings of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) to outline my plans for these meetings, and to invite your input and collaboration in preparing for them.

I would like to convey to you my sincere thanks for the confidence you have expressed in supporting my appointment as Chairman of 2012 BWC Meetings. I am committed to working closely with you in a transparent and inclusive manner, and I count on your support and active engagement in the preparations for these Meetings.

The Meeting of Experts will be held in Geneva from 16–20 July 2012, and the Meeting of States Parties from 10–14 December 2012. As mandated by the Seventh Review Conference, these meetings will discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on:

1. The three Standing Agenda Items, namely:

- (a) Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X;
- (b) Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention;
- (c) Strengthening national implementation;

2. The following item that the Review Conference decided would be discussed in 2012 and 2013:

How to enable fuller participation in the Confidence-building Measures (CBMs).

The Seventh Review Conference also decided on a number of topics to be addressed under each of the Standing Agenda Items. The attached paper lists these topics for your ease of reference; the full details can be found in the Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference, BWC/CONF.VII/7.

In addition to the report of the Meeting of Experts on the items mentioned above, the Meetings of States Parties will consider, on an annual basis, progress towards the universalization of the Convention and the annual reports of the Implementation Support Unit.

Our first challenge is to develop a strategy and a draft programme of work that would allow us to deal effectively with this broad range of topics in the very limited time available at the Meeting of Experts, and to help States Parties to select the appropriate experts to participate therein. The Seventh Review Conference has already specified an area of focus for the Standing Agenda Item on science and technology in 2012, and I might suggest at this preliminary stage that we think about the idea of structuring the deliberations on the other two standing agenda items in a similar way, in order to focus on particular areas this year, and perhaps leave other areas for greater attention in subsequent years. This could help us to facilitate our work and maximise the use of the 2012-2015 intersessional process within the constraints of the time and resources available.

We will also need to start identifying the relevant international organizations, professional and academic associations, and other NGOs and experts that we might wish to invite to participate in the Meeting of Experts and share their experience and expertise. I will be drawing up a list of possible invitees, but I would warmly welcome any suggestions you might have. The Implementation Support Unit will once again help us in our work by preparing background papers, and any suggestions for what to include in these would also be welcome.

I will be consulting widely with delegations on these matters, and I hope soon to avail myself of the assistance of two vice-chairs, to be nominated by the Group of Eastern European States and the Western Group respectively. I intend to fully involve the vice-chairs in preparing for the meetings. This will be a team effort. I will also seek an early opportunity to meet each of the regional groups for an initial exchange of views on the work programme for 2012.

Sponsorship programme

The Seventh Review Conference established a sponsorship programme in order to support and increase the participation of developing States Parties in BWC meetings. The ISU will shortly be providing further information on the operation of this programme, but in the meantime I urge any States Party in a position to do so to consider making voluntary contributions to fund this programme.

Confidence-building measures (CBMs)

I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all States Parties to participate in the Confidence-building Measures (CBMs), and to remind you that the **deadline for submission is 15 April 2012**. The Seventh Review Conference adopted revised forms for the CBMs, which are available on the ISU website (www.unog.ch/bwc/cbms). Please contact the ISU if you need any advice or assistance with participating in the CBMs.

Universality

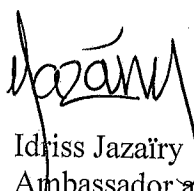
The Seventh Review Conference mandated the Chairman of the intersessional programme to coordinate universalization activities. I will be working with the ISU to develop appropriate contacts with States that are not Parties. I encourage all States Parties to renew their own

efforts to encourage others to join the Convention, using all appropriate bilateral, regional and multilateral channels. As I am required to report on progress to the Meeting of States Parties in December, I would be most grateful if you would keep me informed of your contacts and of any feedback received.

Conclusion

We have a challenging task ahead of us, but with adequate preparation I am confident that we will be able to convert the decisions of the Seventh Review Conference into a renewed and revitalized intersessional programme that makes a genuine contribution to reducing the risks posed to global security by biological weapons.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Idriss Jazaïry
Ambassador and Permanent
Representative of Algeria
Chairman of the Meeting of States
Parties

Annex: Outline of Standing Agenda Items (2 pages)

BWC Intersessional Programme 2012-2015

Outline of Standing Agenda Items (from BWC/CONF.VII/7)

1. Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X

- (a) reports by States Parties on their implementation of Article X, and reports by the ISU on the operation of the database system to facilitate assistance requests and offers;
- (b) challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible means of overcoming these;
- (c) a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of Article X taking into account all of its provisions, including facilitation of cooperation and assistance, including in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes, and identification of critical gaps and needs in these areas;
- (d) ways and means to target and mobilize resources, including financial resources, to address gaps and needs for assistance and cooperation, in particular from developed to developing States Parties, and from international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders;
- (e) education, training, exchange and twinning programmes and other means of developing human resources in the biological sciences and technology relevant to the implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries;
- (f) capacity-building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity, and for detecting, reporting, and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation;
- (g) coordination of cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.

2. Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention

- (a) new science and technology developments that have potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention;
- (b) new science and technology developments that have potential benefits for the Convention, including those of special relevance to disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation;
- (c) possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management, as appropriate, in research and development involving new science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention;

- (d) voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct by scientists, academia and industry;
- (e) education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology.
- (f) science- and technology-related developments relevant to the activities of multilateral organizations such as the WHO, OIE, FAO, IPPC and OPCW;
- (g) any other science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention.

The following topical scientific subject will be considered in 2012:

Advances in enabling technologies, including high-throughput systems for sequencing, synthesizing and analyzing DNA; bioinformatics and computational tools; and systems biology.

3. Strengthening national implementation

- (a) a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, especially Articles III and IV;
 - (b) ways and means to enhance national implementation, sharing best practices and experiences, including the voluntary exchange of information among States Parties on their national implementation, enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions;
 - (c) regional and sub-regional cooperation that can assist national implementation of the Convention;
 - (d) national, regional and international measures to improve laboratory biosafety and security of pathogens and toxins;
 - (e) any potential further measures, as appropriate, relevant for implementation of the Convention.
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