

**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**

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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

24 April 2009

Excellency,

I am writing once more in my capacity as Chair of the 2009 meetings of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) to update you on preparations for the Meeting of Experts to be held in Geneva from 24-28 August 2009.

I would like to thank States Parties for their feedback and suggestions following my initial letter of 6 February 2009, and during the subsequent regional group meetings held on 26 and 27 February. Based on this feedback, I have developed further plans for the Meeting of Experts. In the annex to this letter is an outline of the proposed arrangements, including a list of the organizations I propose to invite to the meeting, suggestions for the composition of national delegations, proposals for the structure of the meeting (including a poster session), and details of the background papers to be prepared by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

I would be interested in further feedback on these proposed arrangements, and in particular would welcome suggestions on additional organizations to be invited, especially from developing countries. I urge States Parties to begin their preparations in earnest: to identify potential members of their delegations; to prepare working papers and presentations on their national experiences; and to identify areas in which they need, or may be able to provide, assistance for building capacity. I also again ask States Parties to consider sponsoring the participation of experts from other States Parties, to ensure a broad range of representation from all regions.

As in previous years, we will have only one week in which to deal with an important and complex topic. I would therefore like to encourage States Parties to focus their preparations on the precise terms of the mandated topic. Our work on "*promoting capacity-building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment*" will certainly contribute to the improved implementation of Article X of the Convention. But we have neither the time nor the mandate to consider Article X in its entirety. As I said in my first letter and in the regional group meetings, my aim is to continue the successful pattern established by previous meetings and ensure that we make best use of existing precedents and current working practices. This includes sticking closely to the assigned topic.

The time pressures also mean we will have to manage our meeting schedule carefully. We must ensure that the experts coming from around the world have a fair opportunity to speak and to

answer your questions, and are able to plan their participation according to a reliable schedule. I would therefore propose at this early planning stage that we set a limit of **five minutes** for national statements to the meeting, and **15 minutes** for technical presentations. I ask all States Parties to take these limits into account when preparing their contributions.

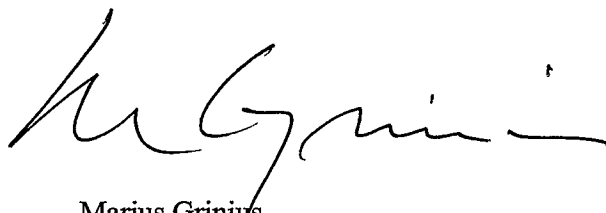
As well as preparations for the Meeting of Experts, work is continuing on **universalization**. Once again, I urge States Parties to find opportunities to make contact with states not party – especially with such states located in your region - and encourage them to accede to the Convention, and to inform the ISU of any such contact. I am currently pursuing an initiative with the ISU to work with several Pacific island states on accession; I would be glad to hear of initiatives in other regions. I would also like to remind States Parties that the deadline of 15 April for submission of the annual **Confidence-building Measures (CBMs)** has now passed: please submit your CBM as soon as possible if you have not yet done so. Submissions may be made at any time, and the ISU is ready to provide assistance for preparing CBMs.

In summary, I would request States Parties to:

- Review the proposed arrangements in the annex, and suggest any additional organizations to be invited or activities to be undertaken;
- Identify potential members of their delegations (see annex for suggestions);
- Begin preparing working papers and presentations on their national arrangements for disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment;
- Identify specific areas in which they may require, or be able to offer, assistance for building capacity in disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment;
- Consider sponsoring the participation of experts from other States Parties;
- Contact and lobby states not party to the Convention, and inform the ISU of the outcome;
- Submit CBMs as soon as possible, if not already submitted.

I will seek an opportunity to meet the regional groups following the NPT PrepCom in May. At those meetings we will review preparations, and I will invite the groups to report on their progress on each of the points above. In the meantime, I am available for bilateral consultations at your convenience. The Implementation Support Unit is also at your disposal for any enquiries of a technical and administrative nature, and I encourage you to consult the ISU website (<http://www.unog.ch/bwc>) for up-to-date information and documentation.

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



Marius Grinius
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada
Chairman of the Meeting of States Parties

Annex – Proposed Arrangements for the BWC Meeting of Experts (24-28 August 2009)

Mandated topic

"With a view to enhancing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes, promoting capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases:

(1) for States Parties in need of assistance, identifying requirements and requests for capacity enhancement; and

(2) from States Parties in a position to do so, and international organizations, opportunities for providing assistance related to these fields."

Participation

National delegations

States Parties are encouraged to include in their national delegations experts from their health ministries, other government agencies involved in disease surveillance and response, and relevant scientific, professional and private-sector bodies. In particular, it may be useful to include a representative from the National IHR Focal Point established under the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR).

International, regional and other organizations to be invited by the Chair

- World Health Organization (WHO)
- World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)
- ASEAN Center for Disease Control
- Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance
- East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network (EAIDSNet)
- African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET)
- ProMED
- Pulsenet International, and regional chapters (food-borne disease surveillance)
- HealthMap
- Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- GCC Malaria Program
- Mekong Delta Surveillance Network
- APEC Information Sharing
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Google Foundation

States Parties are invited to suggest additional organizations or individuals.

Structure of the Meeting

Although the details of the schedule for the Meeting of Experts will be elaborated in consultation with States Parties at a later stage, it is envisaged that the meeting will include the following main elements:

- Introductory statements from States Parties;
- Presentations from States Parties on their national disease surveillance arrangements;
- Presentations from international and regional organizations on their roles and activities;
- Presentations from States Parties on their specific needs for capacity-building; discussion of challenges and problems in the area of disease surveillance;
- Presentations from States Parties on their specific capabilities and experiences in providing assistance for capacity-building; discussion of sources of assistance and mechanisms for promoting capacity-building;
- Discussion panel on integrating responses to human, animal and plant diseases;
- Discussion panel on public-private partnerships as a tool for dealing with disease;
- Poster session on requests for and offers of assistance for capacity-building.

As was the case last year, the **poster session** will provide an opportunity for experts to meet freely, to discuss their respective projects and fields of expertise, and to make connections for future cooperation. States Parties are invited to **prepare posters describing their needs and capabilities** related to the topic, for example:

- Problems or challenges in national disease surveillance or diagnostic capability;
- Specific projects planned or underway that are in need of funding or technical assistance;
- Assistance projects successfully undertaken which may be repeated elsewhere or provide a model for others;
- Resources, facilities, expertise, personnel, technical advice, etc, that may be made available to other States Parties to help build capacity.

Technical information on poster sizes, etc, will be available shortly from the 2009 Meeting of Experts page of the ISU website (<http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting>).

Background papers

The Implementation Support Unit plans to prepare the following four background papers to assist States Parties in their preparation for the meeting:

1. Relevant international and regional developments in disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment (an update of the background papers for the 2004 BWC meetings: BWC/MSP/2004/MX/INF.1 and /INF2.);
 2. Existing agreements, understandings and proposals in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment;
 3. The provision of assistance in other international settings: models for capacity-building in other fields that may be applicable to disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment;
 4. Existing international and regional sources of assistance for capacity-building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment.
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Annex – Universalization: States not party to the Biological Weapons Convention

States signed but not ratified (signatories)

1. Burundi*
2. Central African Republic*
3. Côte d'Ivoire*
4. Egypt
5. Guyana*
6. Haiti*
7. Liberia*
8. Malawi*
9. Myanmar
10. Nepal*
11. Somalia
12. Syrian Arab Republic
13. United Republic of Tanzania*

States neither signed nor ratified

1. Andorra*
2. Angola
3. Cameroon*
4. Chad*
5. Comoros*
6. Djibouti*
7. Eritrea*
8. Guinea*
9. Israel
10. Kiribati*
11. Marshall Islands*
12. Mauritania*
13. Micronesia (Federated States of)*
14. Mozambique*
15. Namibia*
16. Nauru*
17. Niue*
18. Samoa*
19. Tuvalu*

* State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)