

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

INFORMAL PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN ON UNIVERSALIZATION ACTIVITIES

(For distribution to the regional groups on 19-20 November 2008; to be updated with additional information prior to the Meeting of States Parties)

I. Overview

1. Three states have ratified or acceded to the Convention since the 2007 Meeting of States Parties: Zambia, Madagascar and the United Arab Emirates. The total number of States Parties now stands at 162; a further 13 states have signed but not ratified the Convention; and an additional 20 states have neither signed nor ratified the Convention. This report outlines what is known about these 33 states.

2. Since the 2007 Meeting of States Parties, the following universalization activities have been undertaken by the Chairman and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU):

- (i) A member of the ISU participated on 5 June 2008 in a meeting in Malawi entitled "Building Stakeholdership in Support of Malawi's Ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention." The meeting was organised by the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP) in partnership with the Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR-Lilongwe, Malawi) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS-Pretoria, South Africa). It was facilitated by the Malawi Ministry for Foreign Affairs and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway.
- (ii) The ISU held a French-language awareness raising and universalization seminar in Geneva on 12 June 2008. Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Haiti participated in the event. Feedback highlighted the importance of improving interaction with states that use languages other than English.
- (iii) On 1 July 2008, the ISU participated in the Geneva Forum event "Disarmament and Arms Control, an orientation for Egyptian Diplomats". Discussions held included the possibility of Egypt ratifying the Convention.
- (iv) From 15 to 17 October 2008, on the margins of the First Committee at UN headquarters in New York, the Chairman held meetings with permanent representatives or other officials from states not party.
- (v) From 17 to 20 November 2008, the Chairman held meetings in Geneva with permanent representatives or other officials from states not party.
- (vi) On 19 November 2008, the Chairman wrote to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) national authorities of states that are party to the CWC but not the Biological Weapons Convention (see Annex).
- (vii) Throughout the year the ISU has also remained in regular contact with states not party that have expressed an interest in the Convention, sought assistance to join, or requested additional information.

3. Activities held throughout the year have generated additional information on progress towards universalization. This report includes data from the activities listed above, as well as from communications from States Parties, states not party, and interested organisations, such as a letter from the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP) to the Chairman dated 12 November 2008¹.

4. The following table shows states not party by geographical region:

Geographical region	States not party to the Convention	Total
Asia and Pacific	Cook Islands, Israel, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Myanmar ² , Nauru, Nepal ² , Niue, Samoa, Syrian Arab Republic ² , Tuvalu	12
Latin America and Caribbean	Guyana ² , Haiti ²	2
Africa	Angola, Burundi ² , Cameroon, Central African Republic ² , Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire ² , Djibouti, Egypt ² , Eritrea, Guinea, Liberia ² , Malawi ² , Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia ² , United Republic of Tanzania ²	18
Europe	Andorra	1

5. The following table shows states not party by progress towards ratification or accession:

Situation	States not party to the Convention	Total
Accession or ratification process well advanced	Burundi ² , Cameroon, Comoros, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Mozambique, Myanmar ² , Tuvalu	8
Accession or ratification process started	Côte d'Ivoire ² , Namibia, Nepal ²	3
Waiting for further information, assistance, or has other priorities, etc.	Andorra, Angola, Central African Republic ² , Djibouti, Guyana ² , Haiti ² , Liberia ² , Malawi ² , Mauritania, Somalia ² , Samoa, United Republic of Tanzania ²	12
No action expected in near future	Egypt ² , Israel, Syrian Arab Republic ²	3

¹ The letter summarizes BWPP's outreach and awareness raising activities and information collected from briefings and workshops held in Geneva and in signatories and states not party.

² Signatory (not ratified)

Situation	States not party to the Convention	Total
No information or feedback yet received	Chad, Eritrea, Guinea, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue	7

6. The following states not party have requested assistance relevant to universalization efforts:

- (i) Angola – requested support and assistance to ratify the Convention at an EU Joint Action meeting in April 2007;
- (ii) Cameroon – in July 2008, requested the ISU to coordinate the provision of assistance to attend meetings of the Convention to raise the domestic profile of the importance of its ratification;
- (iii) Central African Republic – requested support and assistance to ratify the Convention at an EU Joint Action meeting in April 2007;
- (iv) Cook Islands – requested support and assistance to ratify the Convention at an EU Joint Action meeting in November 2006;
- (v) Côte d’Ivoire – requested assistance to ratify the Convention at a meeting with the former Chairman in November 2007. In December 2007, Côte d’Ivoire also requested the ISU to coordinate the provision of assistance to attend meetings of the Convention to raise the domestic profile of the importance of its ratification;
- (vi) Haiti – in November 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship expressed an interest in holding a national awareness raising meeting;
- (vii) Liberia – in November 2008, requested the ISU to coordinate the provision of assistance to attend meetings of the Convention to raise the domestic profile of the importance of its ratification;
- (viii) Mauritania – at a meeting with the Chairman on 17 November 2008, requested assistance in preparing an instrument of accession.

II. Signatories

Burundi

7. Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that a representative of Burundi had informed them that Burundi had attempted to ratify the Convention in 2007 but failed to deposit an acceptable instrument of ratification. On 17 November 2008, the Chairman met with a representative of Burundi in Geneva, who confirmed that his country was willing to join the Convention and that there was no political obstacle preventing Burundi from becoming a State Party.

Central African Republic

8. The Central African Republic requested assistance to ratify the Convention in April 2007. Additional feedback from, or information about, the Central African Republic has yet to be received.

Côte d'Ivoire

9. Côte d'Ivoire participated in the ISU French-language awareness raising and universalization seminar (Geneva, 12 June 2008). No additional information was provided as to whether the national parliament had reviewed the draft act for ratification placed before it by the Executive, as described in the 2007 report on universalization activities.

Egypt

10. Egyptian diplomats participated in an event organised by the Geneva Forum entitled "Disarmament and Arms Control, an orientation for Egyptian Diplomats" (Geneva, 1 July 2008). The meeting was an opportunity to raise awareness and promote universalization of the Convention amongst Egyptian diplomats. Although the participants expressed interest in the aims and objectives of the Convention, no further movement seems likely at present.

Guyana

11. Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that a representative of Guyana had informed them that other issues were perceived as more pressing, given its limited resources.

Haiti

12. Haiti participated in the ISU French language awareness raising and universalization seminar (Geneva, 12 June 2008). Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that a representative of Haiti had advised that the Political Department is keen to hold a national meeting to raise awareness about the Convention. This request was reiterated at a meeting between the Chairman and a Haitian diplomat in Geneva on 19 November 2008. During this meeting, the Haitian representative explained that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not convinced of the need to ratify the Convention given Haiti's domestic situation and other priorities. Following the discussion with the Chairman the representatives noted that an awareness-raising event in Haiti could help in this regard.

Liberia

13. On 17 October 2008, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Liberia met the Chairman in New York and confirmed that Liberia had no objections to ratifying the Convention. She added that it was a matter of getting the necessary domestic priority. The Liberian Chemical Weapons Convention National Authority contacted the ISU to request assistance to participate in meetings of the Biological Weapons Convention to help raise the priority of ratifying the Convention.

Malawi

14. A member of the ISU participated in the BWPP, CHRR and ISS seminar in Malawi (Lilongwe, 5 June 2008). The event aimed to raise awareness about the Convention among parliamentarians, policy makers, branches of government as well as other stakeholders. Discussions held during this meeting reiterated the importance of assistance (both administrative and financial) in encouraging states to join. In New York on 17 October 2008, the Chairman met the Permanent Representative of Malawi and an official from the legal department of the foreign ministry. The discussion revealed increased recognition of the benefits of ratifying the Convention, and the Permanent Representative hoped that action would be taken soon. He also noted how helpful the in-country meeting had been in convincing officials that Malawi should ratify the Convention and motivating them to move forward.

Myanmar

15. The Permanent Representative of Myanmar met the Chairman in Geneva on 17 November 2008, where he expanded upon information, provided in 2007, that the ratification process was underway. He told the Chairman that the government of Myanmar was in the process of reviewing all prospective international commitments, including the Biological Weapons Convention. He undertook to send a further recommendation to the capital on the importance of ratifying the Convention. The meeting was followed by a request to the ISU to provide additional information on joining the Convention. The ISU provided this information to the Permanent Mission of Myanmar the same day.

Nepal

16. At a meeting between its Permanent Representative and the Chairman, on 18 November 2008 in Geneva, Nepal confirmed that it was in the process of ratifying the Convention. Since the last report, the Permanent Representative noted that his government had been in transition and now that a parliament had been elected, one barrier to ratifying had been removed. However, he also noted that Nepal currently perceives other issues as more pressing, given its limited resources.

Somalia

17. The Permanent Representative of Somalia met the Chairman in Geneva on 17 November 2008 and said that Somalia was sensitised to the Convention at a high level. The Permanent Representative saw a link between the Convention and other issues, such as toxic waste dumping, illicit trafficking and the proliferation of weapons. He agreed to recommend ratification to the President at a forthcoming meeting, and expressed an interest in addressing the Meeting of States Parties on the situation.

Syrian Arab Republic

18. In 2007 the Syrian Arab Republic linked ratifying the Convention to other regional security considerations. Additional information has yet to be received.

United Republic of Tanzania

19. The United Republic of Tanzania participated in the BWPP, CHRR and ISS meeting in Malawi (Lilongwe, 5 June 2008). Representatives at that meeting expressed an interest in the Convention. Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that the United Republic of Tanzania had advised that the Government was yet to identify an appropriate government department or other stakeholder capable of implementing the Convention, but that the United Republic of Tanzania was interested in moving forwards with ratification.

III. States neither signed nor ratified

Andorra

20. Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that a representative of Andorra had advised that it currently perceives other issues as more pressing, given its limited resources.

Angola

21. The Permanent Representative of Angola in Geneva met the Chairman on 17 November 2008 and reiterated the importance of increasing domestic awareness about the Convention. The timing for such activities was particularly appropriate as Angola had recently changed its government. The Permanent Representative confirmed that Angola is interested in acceding to the Convention and undertook to raise the issue at a forthcoming briefing by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the new government.

Cameroon

22. As a result of universalization activities to date, Cameroon was an active participant in the 2008 Meeting of Expert and gave a presentation on its relevant national activities. In the lead up to the meeting, Cameroon requested the ISU to coordinate the provisions of assistance to attend meetings of the Convention to raise the domestic profile of the importance of its accession. A representative of Cameroon informed the ISU on 10 November 2008 that a letter from the Ministry of Environment and Protection of the Nature had been sent on 25 September 2008 to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to further recommend accession to the BWC. Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that a representative from Cameroon had advised that the file has been sent to the President and that accession could be imminent.

Chad

23. Chad participated in the ISU French language awareness raising and universalization seminar (Geneva, 12 June 2008). Additional feedback from, or information about, Chad has yet to be received.

Comoros

24. Information reported in October 2007 indicated that a draft instrument of ratification was awaiting signature by the President of Comoros. On 16 October 2008, the Chairman met the Permanent Representative of Comoros in New York, who confirmed that ratification procedures were underway, but had no further information on when they would be completed.

Cook Islands

25. Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that accession has been approved and that an instrument of accession is being prepared with the assistance of the BWPP.

Djibouti

26. The Permanent Representative of Djibouti met the Chairman in Geneva on 17 November 2008 and confirmed his government's support for the Convention. However, he described the low level of awareness both in Geneva and in the capital, as Djibouti did not have a mission in Geneva before the end of 2006. He undertook to recommend to his Minister that Djibouti accede to the Convention, and said he would follow this issue carefully and develop better contact with the Implementation Support Unit.

Eritrea

27. Feedback from, or information about, Eritrea has yet to be received.

Guinea

28. Guinea participated in the ISU French language awareness raising and universalization seminar (Geneva, 12 June 2008). Feedback from, or information about, Guinea has yet to be received.

Israel

29. Israel participated in the EU Joint Action regional seminar for the Middle East (Rome, 16-17 April 2008). Additional feedback from, or information about, Israel has yet to be received.

Kiribati

30. Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that the BWPP was currently assisting Kiribati to determine its status under the Convention. The BWPP has established that prior to independence Kiribati was covered by the terms of the Convention through the administering power. On its independence, Kiribati declared to the UN Secretary General that it would succeed to all international commitments made under the previous regime. Clarification that this included the Convention is expected soon.

Mauritania

31. On Tuesday 18 November in Geneva, the Chairman met the Permanent Representative of Mauritania, who said that Mauritania is seriously considering joining the Convention. Mauritania, however, linked accession to issues of priority and capacity, and a request for assistance in drafting the instrument of accession was made. To facilitate the process, the Permanent Representative suggested that the Chairman write again to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and that the ISU establish a channel of communication directly with the Chemical Weapons Convention National Authority, as there is currently no dedicated disarmament office in Mauritania.

Marshall Islands

32. Feedback from, or information about, the Marshall Islands has yet to be received.

Micronesia (Federated States of)

33. Feedback from, or information about, Micronesia has yet to be received.

Mozambique

34. Mozambique reported in 2007 that its accession efforts were well advanced and has agreed to meet the Chairman on 21 November 2008.

Namibia

35. Namibia reported in 2007 that it had started the accession process. Additional feedback from, or information about, Namibia has yet to be received.

Nauru

36. Feedback from, or information about, Nauru has yet to be received.

Niue

37. Feedback from, or information about, Niue has yet to be received.

Samoa

38. On 16 October 2008 the Permanent Representative of Samoa met the Chairman in New York and confirmed that he had previously recommended that his government accede to the BWC. He also confirmed that no action had yet been taken but that he would send an additional recommendation that Samoa accede to the Convention.

Tuvalu

39. Information provided by the BWPP (letter dated 12 November 2008) indicated that the BWPP was currently assisting Tuvalu to determine its status under the Convention. BWPP has established that prior to independence Tuvalu was covered by the terms of the Convention through the administering power. On its independence, Tuvalu declared to the

United Nations Secretary General that it would succeed to all international commitments made under the previous regime. Clarification that this includes the Convention is expected soon.

Annex

**List of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention
which are not party to the Biological Weapons Convention**

(as at November 2008)

1. Andorra
2. Burundi*
3. Cameroon
4. Chad
5. Cook Islands
6. Côte d'Ivoire*
7. Djibouti
8. Eritrea
9. Guinea
10. Guyana*
11. Haiti*
12. Kiribati
13. Liberia*
14. Malawi*
15. Marshall Islands
16. Mauritania
17. Micronesia (Federated States of)
18. Mozambique
19. Namibia
20. Nauru
21. Nepal*
22. Niue
23. Samoa
24. Tuvalu
25. United Republic of Tanzania*

* BWC signatory (not ratified)
