REPORT


Workshop in Support of the Biological Weapons Convention Extended Assistance Programmes

28-29 March 2017

Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and Other International Organisations in Geneva

Geneva, Switzerland
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I. Introduction


The workshop brought together over 40 participants, including experts nominated by EU Member States and representatives of international organisations and non-governmental organisations. The EU Member States represented at the meeting were Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Also in attendance were representatives from Interpol, the International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), the Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), The Trench, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

The workshop was conducted under the auspices of the EU Council Decision 2016/51/CFSP of 18 January 2016 in support of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). It was held as an activity under Project 3: “Capacity Development for BTWC Implementation”, which aims to develop the capacity of beneficiary States Parties to strengthen their implementation of the BWC at the national level.

The EU announced its decision on the ten beneficiary States Parties to receive assistance under the Council Decision on 28 March 2017, the day prior to the workshop. The ten States Parties are Cameroon, Colombia, Cote d’Ivoire, Iraq, Lebanon, Malawi, Malaysia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Yemen. The EU-nominated experts, some of whom participated in the workshop, are expected to lead assistance missions to the selected countries to assist them with issues relating to BWC implementation such as biosafety and biosecurity, legislative drafting, export controls, law enforcement and other assistance requests. The workshop aimed at discussing best practices in preparation for these assistance missions and lessons learned in the delivery of assistance, in order to enable the experts to effectively support national implementation of the BWC by beneficiary States Parties.

II. Workshop Programme

The opening remarks were delivered by Ambassador Carl Hallergard, the Deputy Head of Delegation of the European Union in Geneva, and Ms. Mary Soliman, the Acting Director of the UNODA Geneva Branch.
The Head of the Political Section for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of the EU Delegation in Geneva, Ms. Anne Kemppainen, opened the substantive part of the workshop by introducing the main objectives of EU Council Decision 2016/51/CFSP, its focus, the activities it implemented throughout 2016 and those planned for 2017. She also referred to the three previous EU Council Decisions and Joint Actions in support of the BWC and their achievements in terms of universalisation, strengthening national implementation and promoting Confidence-Building Measures.\(^1\) Under these four instruments, the EU has contributed just over EUR 6.3 million to BWC implementation since 2006.

Most of the presentations described below are available on the BWC website at http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/9CA83EC698598635C125809E005775CC?OpenDocument

**Session I. Best practices for successful assistance**

The morning session comprised four presentations, delivered by VERTIC, OPCW, UNICRI and the Danish Center for Biosecurity and Biopreparedness (CBB).

**VERTIC** provided a practical overview of its experience delivering national BWC legislative assistance, including best practices for effective preparations, lessons learned, and follow-up activities. VERTIC shared success stories as well as some of the challenges it has encountered in delivering assistance, such as conflicting policy and legislative priorities at national levels, difficulties establishing inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination, and logistical obstacles. VERTIC emphasised two lessons learned: the importance of setting manageable objectives for each given project and having realistic timeframes for assistance activities conducted within a project’s framework.

**OPCW** provided an overview of the national implementation programmes it carries out under Article VII, X and XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). OPCW provided good practice examples in these areas, including its internship programme for legal drafters and national authorities and its pilot initiative of stakeholders fora, which brings together stakeholders from various CWC States Parties in order to promote wider national implementation legislation. OPCW explained how it uses Results-Based Management and Monitoring and Evaluation methodologies for its programming, highlighting it as a good practice as it shifts the focus from “what activities need to be performed” to “what results need to be achieved”.

**UNICRI** introduced the EU’s CBRN Centres of Excellence (CoE) Initiative. It highlighted the concept and the role of National Action Plans (NAPs) as an instrument to identify national gaps and capabilities, to design concrete action to fill the gaps, to improve international coordination and to harmonise existing instruments. UNICRI provided an

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overview of the scope of the CoE Initiative, which encompasses six regions and 56 countries to date, many of which have completed or advanced NAPs. The importance of NAPs as an instrument of coordination was also underlined, particularly their role in the emergence of a UN Group of Friends on CBRN Risk Mitigation, composed of 13 countries; and as a coordinating platform during the 2016 BWC Review Conference and within the G7 Global Partnership Against Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

**CBB** presented its BWC implementation work within Denmark, which ranges from issuing licenses to delivering biosecurity training courses and maintaining a 24/7 response capability. CBB also shared its international assistance programmes, beginning with the establishment of preliminary contacts with national stakeholders through international biosecurity courses through to the development of legal frameworks and implementation activities. CBB provided an overview of the assistance it has provided to Kenya to reinforce its capacity to establish national biosecurity and biopreparedness systems. The biosecurity risk factors underpinning Kenya’s project rationale were underlined, as well as the project’s status in terms of gap analysis, support to the legislative process and training of key personnel.

**Session II. Coordination and cooperation in providing assistance**

This session comprised presentations by INTERPOL, the UNSCR 1540 Support Team, the European Commission, WHO, IFBA and the Netherlands Biosecurity Office.

**INTERPOL** focused on its prevention and crisis response work, highlighting its information-sharing, training and operational support activities. INTERPOL noted that as the global development paradigm shifts to grant more responsibility to local actors, its strategy has also shifted in that direction. INTERPOL referred to its RHINO (Response, Hazard Assessment, Infection Control, National Coordination, Operational Change) project, which sought to address the Ebola outbreak and which comprises a number of steps, amongst them a gap analysis, a workshop to address identified gaps, face-to-face meetings for local stakeholders and the development of a training curriculum. Other project examples were also introduced, such as PETRICHOR, which provides a framework to address cross-border biorisks, and OLEANDER, a table-top exercise.

In its presentation, the **UNSCR 1540 Support Team** emphasised the role of the 1540 Committee as a matchmaker between assistance requests and offers by States, international and regional organisations and the UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. It was underlined that bio-related assistance requests/offers are lacking, as underlined by the Comprehensive Review conducted in 2016. The 1540 Support Team pointed to the need for international coordination and cooperation in biorisk detection and response, coordination with other assistance programmes, an enhanced civil society role and the establishment of common national focal points for assistance coordination. In addition, it would be important to strengthen a regional approach to assistance efforts, to enhance the UNSCR 1540 matchmaking mechanism, and to improve funding.
**The European Commission** (EU CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence) presented its Centres of Excellence (CoE) initiative, explaining that the objective of the Centres is to enhance CBRN risk mitigation and governance in an all-hazard approach. The CoEs are currently spread across 56 partner countries and 28 EU Member States, acting through eight regional secretariats, National Focal Points and National CBRN inter-ministerial teams. The main deliverables of the initiative include the National Needs Assessment, National Action Plans and the Projects, a cross-border call for proposals to which 250 million euros have been assigned for the period 2012-2020. The European Commission underlined the potential synergies between the CoE initiative and Council Decision 2016/51, particularly in terms of coordination with CoE regional secretariats and national focal points and by making use of CoE deliverables, provided partner countries’ consent, and databases.

The **World Health Organisation (WHO)**’s Health Emergency Programme explained its activities to build states’ capacities and to strengthen the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR). WHO elaborated on its emergency programme’s conceptual framework, divided into four categories: early warning, risk assessment and emergency response; prevention and control strategies for high-threat infectious hazards; IHR assessment and critical core capacities; and health systems strengthening in high vulnerability countries. WHO underlined the overlap between Articles 5 and 44 of the IHR and Article X of the BWC and detailed some WHO actions and tools relevant to deliberate outbreaks and its provision of public health expertise in missions involving the use of chemical or biological weapons. WHO also highlighted its work in terms of laboratory strengthening, biosafety and biosecurity, simulation exercises and after action reviews and its role in coordinating preparedness and responses to health emergencies.

The **International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA)** outlined its role as a non-governmental organisation providing assistance to States Parties to help them meet their obligations in the areas of biosafety and biosecurity under the BWC and UNSCR 1540. IFBA also explained its work delivering professional certifications in five disciplines, including biosecurity and biosafety management, noting that States Parties can request assistance in this regard either through UNODA, IFBA or local biosafety associations.

The **Netherlands Biosecurity Office** of the Ministry of Health presented on biosecurity in the Netherlands, touching upon national policy issues, outreach and biosecurity self-assessment tools. At the international level, the Netherland Biosecurity Office highlighted its biosecurity capacity-building assistance in Uganda, where it has helped to strengthen the biosafety and biosecurity capacity of national institutes, as well as its assistance in capacity building activities in Kenya and other neighbouring states in East Africa.

**Session III. Implementation of the BWC Council Decision: Practical Issues**

This session focused on the role of UNODA in the implementation of Council Decision 2016/51, including its support for the nominated experts and other service providers and the substantive and logistical arrangements necessary to implement Project 3 of the Council
Decision. The ten beneficiary States Parties under Project 3 were reiterated and the criteria for their selection was briefly outlined.

UNODA outlined some of the expected results of Project 3, such as the adoption of appropriate national legislative measures for the implementation of the BWC and better coordination and cooperation among BWC stakeholders. Underlining the importance of the active involvement of the EU nominated experts, UNODA highlighted the creation of a roster of experts and the exercise that it will be conducting to match suitable experts with beneficiary States Parties. UNODA also gave an overview of the logistical arrangements to be taken into account, including travel, funding and safety and security during the stages of pre-visit preparations and in-country activities.

III. Conclusions

The main conclusions reached by workshop participants during its three working sessions included suggestions for the successful preparation, delivery and follow-up of in-country assistance, illustrated through best practices and lessons learned, and to ensure effective coordination and cooperation among various assistance providers and local actors and stakeholders.

Session I: Best practices for successful assistance

✓ Ensure the commitment of the State Party and its ownership of the assistance programme throughout its lifecycle;

✓ As a long-term activity, ensure the establishment of a solid legal and regulatory framework to sustain the implementation of BWC-related obligations at the national level;

✓ Adopt a methodological approach to assistance provision;

✓ Follow up on the assistance delivered to ensure the sustainability and impact of the results achieved; and

✓ Approaches such as the Results-Based Managed framework, particularly its evaluation tools, can provide an effective basis for developing, monitoring and evaluating the progress of an assistance programme.

Session II: Coordination and cooperation in providing assistance

✓ Coordination and cooperation are crucial, both within the recipient State Party and among the assistance providers involved in the assistance programme;

✓ Pre-existing tools should be fully utilised and taken advantage of; that is, mapping and identifying existing frameworks and mechanisms for implementation is a pre-requisite for successful coordination;
✓ Explore a cooperative approach with each beneficiary State Party rather than imposing external coordination models; and

✓ Conduct a mapping exercise to better understand local stakeholders and the local dynamics and to create synergies during the implementation of the programme.


✓ Seek feedback from experts engaged in previous EU Joint Actions and Council Decisions as guidance;

✓ Give advance notice to experts about their requested involvement in an assistance programme;

✓ For information purposes and, as necessary, UNODA may share the list of beneficiary States Parties’ National Focal Points with assistance providers;

✓ Identify National Focal Points in each assistance provider State Party for a better coordination of such assistance;

✓ Taking into account the limited resources for the implementation of extended assistance programmes, identify priorities and narrow down topics when designing the best approach to an assistance programme; and

✓ Identify and point out in advance to all experts involved in an assistance programme the relevant safety and security arrangements.