

**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, 1-5 December 2014

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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

14 February 2014

**BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION: MEETINGS IN 2014**

Excellency,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman of the 2014 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 begin by thanking you for the confidence you have expressed in supporting my appointment as Chairman. I am also privileged to enjoy the support of our two distinguished Vice-chairs, Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia and Ms. Judit Körömi, Special Representative of the Foreign Minister of Hungary for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation. I will be working closely with them throughout the year.

The Meeting of Experts will be held in Geneva from 4–8 August 2014, and the Meeting of States Parties from 1–5 December 2014. As decided by the Seventh Review Conference, these meetings will “discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on” the three standing agenda items and the biennial item, the details of which are included on the attached paper for your ease of reference.

We are now half-way through the 2012–2015 intersessional programme. Under the chairmanship of my two distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Delmi of Algeria and Ms. Körömi, we have developed a sound and practical approach to our mandated task, and our work has been characterised by a sense of trust and common purpose. I intend to continue along this path, maintaining our tried and tested working practices, and to work with States Parties to build on the solid platform we have created together.

One way we can build on this foundation is to start giving greater focus to the **effective action** part of our mandate. The reports of the 2012 and 2013 Meetings of States Parties contain a broad range of **common understandings**, some quite detailed. In 2014, we will continue to discuss, and promote common understanding on the three standing agenda items

and the biennial topic. But as we move closer to the Eighth Review Conference in 2016, this may be a suitable point to turn more of our attention towards options for promoting effective action. I would therefore like to request your feedback and assistance in identifying which areas may be ripe for a greater focus on action, and how such action might be achieved in practical terms, within the limits of our mandate. I would be particularly interested in hearing your initial reflections when I meet with the regional groups.

The other specific opportunity we have to build on our work is the new biennial topic. In 2014 and 2015, we will consider how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties. This is an important topic that is of immediate practical concern to many States Parties. Its relevance has only been further underlined by the recent events in Syria. I would welcome your views on how we should approach this topic, including the problems which need to be addressed and which organizations and experts might be most relevant to our discussion.

I also believe it is important to continue the effort begun last year to "bring in more voices" to our work, to ensure that (1) our work programme benefits from a broader range of expertise and perspectives; and (2) that a larger proportion of States Parties can benefit directly from participation in our work programme. These efforts have yielded positive initial results and should be furthered.

- In order to ensure appropriate expertise is present at the Meeting of Experts, I would like to encourage you to start thinking about the composition of your delegations. I am sure that working together to develop the details for the Meeting of Experts as early as possible will help us identify in a timely manner the technical expertise we may need to draw upon.
- I will soon start to consider which international organizations and Guests of the Meeting might best contribute to our work this year. I would welcome any thoughts and suggestions you might have on this.
- We should make the best use we can of our sponsorship programme and I urge any States Parties in a position to do so to consider making voluntary contributions. I also encourage those States Parties that have not been able to participate in past meetings to make use of this programme to do so. We have already received requests for sponsorship and the ISU will shortly circulate instructions on how to apply for support.
- Throughout the year, I will reach out to those States that are not currently parties and encourage them both to join the Convention and to participate in our meetings. 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. To help coordinate efforts, I would be grateful if you would keep me and the ISU informed of your contacts and any feedback received.

As well as the formal meetings of the intersessional programme, there will be throughout the year a number of workshops, seminars and other events which support our work directly and indirectly. I encourage you to share information on such events with other States Parties and

the ISU, to participate wherever possible, and to report back to our formal meetings where relevant and appropriate.

Although I am seeking your views on a number of specific issues, I welcome all ideas and feedback you may have on any aspect of our work this year. This is a collaborative process, not one driven by the Chair, and I rely on your advice and support. I can be readily contacted directly by e-mail at [urs.schmid@eda.admin.ch](mailto:urs.schmid@eda.admin.ch), or else through the ISU or the Permanent Mission of Switzerland. I propose to consult the regional groups for an initial exchange of views in the week of 17 March, but please do not hesitate to contact me before then if there is any matter you would like to discuss.

We are making solid progress through the 2012–2015 intersessional programme, and I am confident that with active and thorough preparation we can continue to shape an effective programme that makes a genuine contribution to reducing the risks posed to global security by biological weapons. I look forward to working closely with you in pursuit of our shared objective of strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention.

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



Urs Schmid  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of  
Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament  
Chairman of the Meeting of States Parties

**BWC Intersessional Programme 2014****Outline of Standing and Biennial Agenda Items (from BWC/CONF.VII/7)**

The purpose of the intersessional programme is to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on those issues identified for inclusion in the intersessional programme by this Seventh Review Conference.

**A. Standing agenda items****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 2014:**

Advances in the understanding of pathogenicity, virulence, toxicology, immunology and related issues.

**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.

**B. Biennial item (2014–2015)**

How to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties.

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