
**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**

23 November 2017

English only

2017 Meeting

Geneva, 4-8 December 2017

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Issues of substance and process for the period

before the next Review Conference, with a view

to reaching consensus on an intersessional process

**Strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
through a reinforced intersessional work programme**

**Submitted by the members of the Global Partnership Against the
Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction: Australia,
Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France,
Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan,
Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand,
Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland,
Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
United States of America and the European Union**

1. The Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP) was established in 2002 to prevent terrorists or the states that support them from acquiring or developing weapons of mass destruction and related materials, equipment and technology. In 2011, it identified biological security as a collective programming priority, and in 2012 adopted five key “deliverables” through which Partners would seek to prevent, and if necessary mitigate, biological threats:

- (a) Secure and account for materials that represent biological proliferation risks;
- (b) Develop and maintain appropriate and effective measures to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the deliberate misuse of biological agents;
- (c) Strengthen national and global networks to rapidly identify, confirm and respond to biological attacks;
- (d) Reinforce and strengthen biological nonproliferation principles, practices, and instruments; and
- (e) Reduce proliferation risks through the advancement and promotion of safe and responsible conduct in the biological sciences.

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2. The thirty-one GP members place great importance on preventing biological threats, regardless of cause, through the funding and implementation of biosecurity and biosafety projects in collaboration with countries in need and relevant international organizations and initiatives. They recognize that effective international cooperation and assistance consistent with Article X of the BTWC is critical to building global capacity to respond to biological threats and achieving many of our shared objectives under the Convention. (A separate working paper will be submitted to the December 2017 Meeting of States Parties (MSP) to highlight Article X-relevant projects implemented and/or funded by GP members in the past year.)
3. In this context, GP members affirm their commitment to supporting and reinforcing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), the cornerstone of the international ban on biological weapons. GP members regret that the Eighth BTWC Review Conference, held in November 2016, was unable to reach consensus on a new program of work, but recall that the Conference Final Document tasked the December 2017 MSP to “make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process.”
4. In order to strengthen the Convention and make progress on our shared objectives, GP members attach high importance to adopting a strong, substantive programme of work at the December meeting. Such a programme should provide for focused, expert-level work on a balanced array of key topics, leading to factual reports and recommendations for consideration at annual Meetings of States Parties, which should oversee implementation of the decisions of the Eighth Review Conference, submit recommendations to the next Review Conference as appropriate, and take necessary actions to address budgetary and financial matters. GP members urge all BTWC States Parties to work constructively, across the traditional boundaries of geography, politics, and economic and technological development, with a view to realizing this goal. GP members welcome and encourage the active engagement of all States Parties in this vital process, and are pleased to have provided voluntary contributions to the BTWC Sponsorship Program to support and increase the participation of developing States Parties in the 2017 MSP.