
**Eighth Review Conference 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**

14 November 2016

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Geneva, 7-25 November 2016

Agenda item 12

**Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions
of the Seventh Review Conference and the question
of future review of the Convention**

**Proposals for the Final Document of the Eighth Review
Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
(BTWC): Strengthening Cooperation with International
Organizations**

**Submitted by Japan: Co-sponsored by Australia, the Netherlands and
the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

I. Introduction

1. Since its entry into force, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and their Destruction (hereinafter “BWC”) has played a significant role in the elimination of biological and toxin weapons while also working as an effective deterrent. Although the BWC is effective, its effectiveness could be further strengthened when combined with other frameworks and measures.
2. This working paper recommends strengthening collaboration between the BWC and international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in support of States Parties which are exposed to emergency as a result of possible violation of the Convention.

II. The Need for Collaboration

3. In such a case as sudden spread of infectious disease, it is hard to determine at the initial stage whether the event has occurred naturally, accidentally or has been caused intentionally.
4. Typically, experts in relevant fields such as doctors and epidemiologists would be dispatched to detect pathogens, provide medical treatment and identify the route of infection. As the outcome of use of biological weapons could cause public health

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emergency, it is important that experts in relevant fields are aware of up-to-date information and trends related to biological threats in addition to ordinary public, animal, or plant health issues.

5. At the Seventh Review Conference in 2011, States Parties recognized that health and security issues are interrelated at both the national and international levels. The Conference highlighted the importance of pursuing initiatives in this area through effective cooperation and sustainable partnerships. The Conference noted *the importance of ensuring that efforts undertaken are effective irrespective of whether a disease outbreak is naturally occurring or deliberately caused*¹.

6. During the Intersessional Period from 2012 to 2016 and at the Preparatory Committee meetings in 2016, a number of States Parties have emphasized the importance of coordination with the WHO, OIE and FAO ² and it has been so recognized at past Review Conferences.

III. The Role of ISU in Article VII activities

7. At the Sixth Review Conference in 2006, the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) was established and given a mandate³ which included, *inter alia*, providing administrative support to meetings, implementation, universalization of the Convention and exchange of confidence-building measures (CBMs).

8. This mandate was renewed at the Seventh Review Conference. In addition to the tasks given at the Sixth Review Conference, the ISU was requested to establish and administer a database for assistance requests and offers, and facilitate the associated exchange of information among States Parties, and support the implementation by the States Parties of the decisions and recommendations of the Seventh Review Conference.

9. In the last intersessional period between 2012-2015, the ISU has actively played an important role in keeping contact with relevant international organizations such as WHO, OIE, FAO, INTERPOL and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Meetings of Experts (MX) and Meetings of States Parties (MSP) in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 have seen the participation of WHO, OIE and FAO staff. In addition, the ISU has invited WHO to participate in regional workshops.

10. There has clearly been increased communication with relevant international organizations due to the ISU's enthusiastic efforts and regular communication. These close communications are important as States Parties can learn from the experiences of international organizations, in particular their successes and failures in managing various emergencies and providing support to States Parties.

11. The effectiveness of the BWC could be further enhanced and strengthened by establishing an effective mechanism to facilitate coordination among States Parties,

¹ BWC/CONF.VII/7

² *The United States Government's Bio-transparency and Openness Initiative* (BWC/MSP/2012/WP.3) by the United States of America *Addressing modern threats in the Biological Weapons Convention: Follow-up and recommendations* (BWC/MSP/2015/WP.6/Rev.1, 14 December 2015) by Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, *Making Article VII effective: relevant lessons and follow-up action from the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa* (BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.2) by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, *Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention Operationalizing mobile biomedical units to deliver protection against biological weapons, investigate their alleged use, and to suppress epidemics of various etiology* (BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP1/Rev.2) by the Russian Federation.

³ BWC/CONF.VI/6

relevant international organizations in charge of countering outbreaks of human, animal or plant disease.

IV. Proposal

12. This Working Paper recommends that the States Parties at this Review Conference adopt the following sentences in its Final Document:

(a) invite experts from relevant international organizations such as WHO, OIE and FAO to participate in future Science and Technology (S&T) review processes and make recommendations to States Parties as to how better prevent the spread of biological agents and dangerous knowledge and technologies related to biological weapons and effectively respond to sudden outbreak of public health emergency. By doing so, States Parties and relevant international organizations will be better able to prevent biological attacks and take necessary countermeasures if occurred;

(b) create a mechanism to facilitate close communication between the BWC States Parties and relevant international organizations so that smooth and swift exchange of information is possible in the event of a public, animal or plant health emergency;

(c) strengthen the mandate and capacity of the ISU to facilitate coordination and cooperation among States Parties and relevant international organizations to effectively respond to public health emergencies caused by violation of the Convention. Increased human resources should be provided for the ISU in consideration of recruitment of staff with a career background in such organizations;

(d) request the ISU to prepare a background document that can serve as a basis for setting out an effective mechanism for collaboration and coordination relevant to Article VII and distribute it before the next MSP; and

(e) establish a working group to examine effective Article VII procedures.

13. We consider that the measures recommended above would significantly enhance the capability to countering outbreaks of human, animal or plant disease, whether natural, accidental or deliberate and thereby achieve effectively the requirements of the BWC.