

# **IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM RESPONSE TO THE EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK FOR THE BWC**

## **Research Project to Inform Recommendations for the 8<sup>th</sup> Review Conference**

**Thursday, December 17, 2015**

**0900-1000**

**Hosted by the United States of America**

### **AGENDA**

- ◆ Opening remarks by U.S. Ambassador Robert Wood
- ◆ Presentation by Dr. Rebecca Katz (U.S. Department of State) and Dr. Matthew Lim (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
- ◆ Comments from the World Health Organization and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- ◆ Discussion on recommendations for topics to be discussed during the intersessional period.

# IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM RESPONSE TO THE EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK FOR THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

## Research Project to Inform Recommendations for the 8<sup>th</sup> Review Conference

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# Objectives

- Project background
- About the project
  - Methodology
  - Interview Questions
- Preliminary findings
- How findings fit within larger reform context



# Ebola Response & the BWC

- Response to Ebola in West Africa has fundamentally challenged preconceptions about international assistance following a public health emergency, straining global public health emergency response and necessitating sustained contributions from:
  - National Governments
  - Intergovernmental Organizations
  - International Organizations: and
  - Charitable Organizations, Foundations, and Individual Donors.



# Ebola Response & the BWC

BWC States Parties recommendations to assess Ebola response for lessons relevant to Article VII of the Convention.



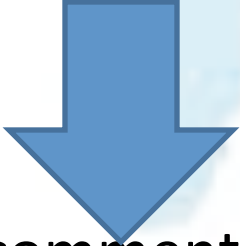
# About Our Project



Intent: to learn from NGOs, IOS and bilateral donors how response to Ebola outbreak might have been different if there had been a deliberate component.



# Methodology

- Reviewed existing policies, relevant literature, and lessons learned documents from Ebola response
  - Developed scenario for deliberate component to Ebola outbreak
  - Identified and interviewed key stakeholders from relevant response organizations on a not-for-attribution basis.
  - Identified series of questions/issues from initial interviews
  - Reviewed discussions from UNIDIR/ISU meeting in August 2015
  - Conducted interviews and consultations with affected states and bilateral donors
- 
- Intent to solicit additional comments from Member States
  - Intent to put together final recommendations for Spring

# Scenario- Deliberate Use

*During the outbreak, a non-state actor claims responsibility for new cases of the disease in an adjacent geographical area with a previously unexposed population.*

- *New cases cannot be epidemiologically linked to other cases in the ongoing outbreak*
- *Can neither prove, nor refute, that “deliberate use” has occurred*





# Scenario- Non Permissive Environment

*Location of some of new cases in region of a country not controlled by national government raising security concerns*

- If an outbreak of a select agent occurs in an environment where there are known bad actors, how does that impact your risk calculation/response?



# Sample Interview Questions

1. Did your organization respond to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa?
2. Was this response normal for your organization , or was it unusual? If so, how/ why?
3. If yes, what was the nature of the response? Did you organization have personnel deployed to West Africa?
4. Would your organization respond to the (fictional) outbreak? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. Would the threat of an intentional event change your organizational response?
6. If so, what would be your organization's primary concern?
7. What organization would you expect to take the lead in the response to a potentially intentional event?
8. Are there appropriate guidance available for what happens if the event is intentional?
9. How would an intentional event change how you perceive your organization's mandate and legal authorities?
10. Would deliberate use impact your willingness to share countermeasures and resources?
11. Are there any other challenges that you experienced in the humanitarian disaster response that might impact an intentional response or investigation?

# Preliminary Findings

- Scenario plausible
- Core mandate of NGOs and IOs would not change in scenario, but major challenges to response
  - Not all NGOs could respond
  - Medical personnel volunteers and safety
  - Increased difficulty with logistics (including medical evacuation)
  - Questions of leadership and coordination
  - Confusion over role of militaries/peacekeepers

# Preliminary Findings: Major Categories

- The role of military resources
- Leadership and coordination
- Interactions with NGOs and international organizations
- Safety and security of medical personnel
- Interaction between humanitarian response efforts and attribution assessments



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7 August 2015  
Geneva, Switzerland

# Outreach to Bilateral Donor and Recipient Nations

- Email outreach to major bilateral donors
- Email outreach to recipient nations
- Sample questions include:
  - Please describe any barriers faced in providing/receiving international assistance in response to Ebola
  - Does your government have guidance/policies for international response to a deliberate event?
  - Specific recommendations for how BWC community might learn from your country's experience with Ebola/Ebola response?



# Current Findings

- The role of military resources
- Leadership and coordination
- Interactions with NGOs and international organizations (including safety and support for responders)
- National plans/doctrine/exercising response to deliberate biological events

# Next Steps

- Review additional literature
- Review additional comments/responses from States Parties
- Discuss challenges
- Possible Wilton Park meeting
- Assess how recommendations for BWC community fit within larger reform efforts
- Revise findings and recommendations for Interessional Program for discussion amongst States Parties

## Saving Lives

The civil-military response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa



# Follow UP

- For copies of slides, questions for States Parties or more information, please contact:
  - [ISN-BPS-DL@state.gov](mailto:ISN-BPS-DL@state.gov)