



**PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

GENEVA – SWITZERLAND

15th July 2021

KMG/BWC-MSP-2020/151

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DATE

Excellency,

I am writing in my capacity as Chairperson of the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

Prevailing circumstances

1. As you will have seen, in recent weeks the public health situation here in Geneva has been improving and the Swiss authorities have therefore lifted some of the previous restrictions on meetings as well as some of the previous restrictions on entry into Switzerland.
2. While the Swiss authorities and the United Nations Office at Geneva are rightly proceeding cautiously, this gradual relaxation of measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic means that various intergovernmental meetings are once again able to take place with physical participation by delegates in Geneva.
3. While the sanitary situation remains uncertain, it is therefore my strong hope that the BWC Meetings of Experts which were postponed from last year will finally be able to take place. More than one year has passed since BWC States Parties have been able to gather for a formal meeting, and much has happened in that time which is of great relevance to the Convention.

Modalities of Meetings of Experts

1. The Meetings of Experts will take place as scheduled from **30 August to 8 September 2021**, in accordance with the guidance provided by the Swiss authorities and the United Nations Office at Geneva. After discussions with the bureau and particularly the five Chairs of the Meetings of Experts, we have specified the technical modalities under which meetings can proceed.
2. The Swiss authorities and the United Nations Office at Geneva still have certain restrictions in place on international meetings which we must obviously respect. We have been allocated a conference room in the Palais des Nations which enables us to guarantee in-person representation for all BWC States Parties. As in 2018 and 2019, the proceedings of the Meetings of Experts will also be webcast live on UNTV in all six official UN languages so that those not in Geneva can follow the Meetings. The Meetings of Experts will meet each day from 10:00-13:00 and from 15:00-18:00 as usual.
3. Furthermore, we have also secured the use of an “overflow” room in which an additional 60 participants will be able to follow the proceedings in real-time. In this

“overflow” room, the proceedings can be followed in English through the audio-visual system. However, delegates who wish to follow the proceedings in other UN official languages can do so on their own devices (laptop, tablet or mobile phone). Arrangements will be made so that requests for the floor from the room are communicated to and met in the main conference room in an efficient manner.

4. While I expect that many people will wish to attend the Meetings of Experts in person, I am aware that others will not be able to travel to Geneva. In order to maximise participation and conduct the Meetings inclusively, and as requested by several delegations, it will also be possible for a number of experts to make presentations remotely, or via pre-recorded interventions. This will allow experts not able to travel to Geneva to still be able to actively participate in the Meetings. The Implementation Support Unit will provide details in due course.
5. In order for the Implementation Support Unit to quickly get an overall picture of the number of participants who intend to travel to Geneva, I would like to kindly request all States Parties to register the members of their delegation as soon as possible, and to indicate whether any delegates would need to contribute remotely. The Implementation Support Unit will shortly circulate details of the registration process, as well as other logistical information.
6. In the same letter, the Implementation Support Unit will also provide details of the Sponsorship Programme. While the Programme will necessarily be limited due to the uncertainties surrounding international travel, we still hope to be able to support experts from a number of developing countries to attend the Meetings.
7. Going forward, I look forward to the continued flexibility of States Parties and stand ready for further engagement with delegations to ensure the success of the Meetings of Experts. I intend to convene a States Parties briefing after the summer break and before the Meetings of Experts.

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

Sincerely, 



H.E. Dr. Cleopa K. Mailu, EGH

**Ambassador/Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations Office in Geneva,
Chairperson of the 2020 BWC Meeting of States Parties**