

**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**

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To: Representatives of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention
Representatives of Signatory States to the Biological Weapons Convention
Representatives of Observer States to the Biological Weapons Convention
Representatives of the United Nations, specialized agencies and regional
intergovernmental organizations
Representatives of non-governmental organizations

16 July 2021

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION – 2020 MEETINGS OF EXPERTS

Excellency,

As you are aware, the 2020 BWC Meetings of Experts were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As agreed by States Parties via a silence procedure on 8 February 2021, the Meetings of Experts have been re-scheduled to be held at the Palais des Nations from 30 August to 8 September 2021.

In his letter dated 15 July 2021, the Chairperson of the Meeting of States Parties, Ambassador Mailu of Kenya, confirmed that the Meetings of Experts would take place as agreed by States Parties. I would hereby like to inform you of the practical arrangements for the Meetings. Detailed information is provided in the annexed Aide-Mémoire.

The dates of the Meetings of Experts are as follows:

- MX1 - Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X (30 to 31 August 2021)
- MX2 - Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention (1 to 2 September 2021)
- MX3 - Strengthening National Implementation (3 September 2021)
- MX4 - Assistance, Response and Preparedness (6 to 7 September 2021)
- MX5 - Institutional Strengthening of the Convention (8 September 2021)

Meeting modalities

The Meetings of Experts will take place in-person in the E Building of the Palais des Nations. Although physical distancing measures which limit the capacity of conference rooms are in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all BWC States Parties will be able to be represented in the conference room. Additional steps to maximise in-person participation while still

adhering to the necessary rules will also be implemented, including the use of an overflow room. In addition, as mentioned in Ambassador Mailu's letter, it will also be possible for a number of experts unable to travel to Geneva to make presentations remotely, or via pre-recorded interventions. The Meetings of Experts will also be broadcast live on UN Web TV with interpretation in all official UN languages.

Registration

Registration for the Meetings of Experts is now open. In line with UNOG guidelines and regulations in response to COVID-19, all participants attending the Meetings of Experts in person, including those who already have a UN grounds pass, must register online at <https://indico.un.org/event/20209/> This is required by the Swiss authorities for COVID-19 contact tracing purposes. Participants are kindly requested to start the registration process now as all registrations must be completed by 13 August 2021.

Before registering, States Parties, Signatory States, Observer States and international organizations are kindly asked to send a note verbale to the Implementation Support Unit at the e-mail address above conveying the composition of their delegation with the full names, titles and functions of the members, no later than 13 August 2021. This note verbale must also be uploaded by each participant during the online registration process.

NGOs and academic institutions should provide an official letter with the full names, titles and functions of their participants, which must also be uploaded during the registration process.

Participants who will follow the proceedings remotely on UN Web TV without travelling to the Palais should not register online. Registration is exclusively for in-person participants whereas UN Web TV can be accessed without prior registration.

Documentation

States Parties intending to submit working papers to the Meetings of Experts are encouraged to do so by 13 August 2021 in order that the documents are processed and made available to all participants in good time. Such documents should be submitted in Microsoft Word format to the e-mail address above.

Sponsorship Programme

The application process for the BWC Sponsorship Programme is now also open. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, support can only be provided to a limited number of experts this year. Experts from developing countries who have never, or not frequently, attended BWC meetings are encouraged to apply in accordance with the criteria and procedure described in the attached Aide-Mémoire. Applications must be received by 6 August 2021. More information and the sponsorship application form can be found [here](#).

Side events

Due to the COVID-19 measures, events and meetings at the Palais des Nations need to comply with specific requirements. The Implementation Support Unit will not therefore have the capacity or resources to facilitate in-person side events during the Meetings of Experts. Please also note that room availability for such events is limited in light of the renovations of the Palais de Nations under the Strategic Heritage Plan. However, virtual side events can be

arranged by the organizers/conveners themselves during the Meetings of Experts and the Implementation Support Unit will compile and make available online a list of all such events communicated to it.

Travel restrictions

Travel restrictions are currently in place in Switzerland due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Persons wishing to participate in the Meetings of Experts are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the requirements regarding entry into Switzerland prior to travel. In addition, persons arriving from certain countries are required to quarantine for 10 days upon arrival in Switzerland. Any delegate coming from such a country will therefore need to arrive at least 10 days in advance of the Meetings of Experts, and then quarantine for 10 days.

More detailed information on the issues described above is provided in the attached Aide-Mémoire. Please review this document carefully prior to registration. Further information and official documents for the Meetings of Experts can be found at <https://meetings.unoda.org/meeting/bwc-mx-2020/>

Any queries can be directed to the Implementation Support Unit at the e-mail address above.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Daniel Feakes
Chief, BWC Implementation Support Unit

Attachment:

- 1) Aide-Mémoire for participants from States Parties, Signatory States, Observer States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.